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Mrs Fitzherbert

MRS. FITZHERBERT

AND

GEORGE IV

BY

W. H. WILKINS, M.A., F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF

"THE LOVE OF AN UNCROWNED QUEEN

IN TWO VOLUMES

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MRS. FITZHERBERT AND GEORGE IV

CHAPTER I

REUNION

(1796–1800)

THE Prince of Wales separated from Mrs Fitzherbert in June 1794, in April 1795 he married the Princess of Wales, in April 1796 he separated from her, in June 1796 he was eagerly trying to renew marital relations with Mrs Fitzherbert Since their parting, Mrs Fitzherbert had avoided the Prince in every possible way She did not answer his letters, she did not heed his messages, and she went to no entertainment, public or private, where he was likely to be present She regarded the separation as complete By his second union he had placed, she considered, an insuperable barrier between them She knew, of course, for the story was common property, of the unhappiness of his married life For the Princess of Wales she felt nothing but compassion She knew also of the Prince's coolness to Lady Jersey, but she made no sign to remind

him of her existence. She kept a brave face to the world, and tried to live her life as though nothing had happened. Except for a month or two in the season she was little in London; she had given up Brighton, and disposed of the lease of Marble Hill. The greater part of the year she spent in comparative retirement at a villa she had bought at Castle Hill, Ealing. There she sought, if not happiness, peace.

But peace was not to be her lot. No sooner had the Prince separated from the Princess of Wales, than he began to make overtures to Mrs. Fitzherbert, sending her messages through friends and so forth. To these she turned a deaf ear, but her reticence made no difference to the Prince. She soon found herself again exposed to difficulties and embarrassments from his constant pursuit. He became definite in his demands, and first through the medium of friends, and then directly, he eagerly pressed her to resume their former relations. At first she scouted the idea. "The link once broken could never be rejoined," she said, but the Prince refused to take "No" for an answer. Again he wrote her letters of great length—pages and pages full of self-reproach and passionate pleading for her to return to him. He was now alone. He had separated from the Princess, and broken with Lady Jersey. He pleaded his lonely position; he was full of remorse for the past, full of promises for the future. There was nothing he would not do if his "dear wife" would only listen to his prayer. He declared his ill-treatment of her was a brief madness, and if she would only take him back it would be the

object of his life to atone for the past. He meant it in all sincerity. Still she would not listen.

When the Princess of Wales heard of this—she heard of everything connected with her husband, and commented freely; it was one of her indiscretions—she said to a friend of the Prince, "She hoped *her husband* would not feel *her* any impediment to the reconciliation he was so desirous for." Shortly after, this gentleman, who was one of the Prince's household, told her he had given the "message" to the Prince, who exclaimed, "Did she say so? Indeed she is very good-natured." No doubt the "message" was repeated to Mrs. Fitzherbert with additions. Before long the Princess heard that she was being represented as taking an active part in bringing the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert together again, and the Prince had commented upon her "message" as one more proof of her indelicacy. "Indelicacy, indeed!" she exclaimed, "and I wonder who could say such a thing, or suppose I could ever have thought it? All I said was, that I hoped *I* did not stand in the way of his happiness." This denial was somewhat equivocal, especially when it is remembered that the Princess was always talking about Mrs. Fitzherbert, and her secret marriage to the Prince of Wales. From the beginning she had shown great inquisitiveness on this subject, which it would have been more dignified for her to have ignored. But the Princess's curiosity was not dictated by malice, for she had always a kindly feeling for the "morganatic wife," whom she considered to have been much ill-treated (like herself) by the Prince.

So matters went on for nearly three years, the Prince growing ever more passionate in his entreaties to Mrs. Fitzherbert to rejoin him. He declared she was the only one who could save him from himself, and she, the woman who loved him, began to waver. She still regarded herself as the Prince's wife, and a reconciliation, after his profession of penitence and sorrow, was the logical consequence of such reasoning. In 1799 she seems at last to have given a half-promise, through Admiral Payne, to rejoin the Prince; but upon reflection she withdrew it. This vacillation brought the Prince to a state bordering on desperation. On June 13, 1799, when staying at Windsor Castle, he wrote her a letter, which had the nature of an ultimatum. He reproached her with having withdrawn her promise; he reminded her of her marriage vows (inconsistently enough, for it was he who had broken them); he declared that he could no longer endure the misery of the last five years, and he vowed that if she still refused a reconciliation he would publicly proclaim his marriage with her, be the consequences what they might. It was in this letter that the Prince made the declaration (already quoted) concerning witnesses to his marriage.

"Think not," said he, "that prayer or any advice whatever will make me delay my purpose, or forswear my oath. Thank God, my witnesses are living—your uncle, and your brother, besides Harris, who I shall call upon as having been informed by me of every, even the *minutest*, circumstances of our marriage."

This letter the Prince sent by the hand of the

Duke of Cumberland, and demanded an immediate answer. It threw Mrs. Fitzherbert into a state of great anxiety and alarm. She knew that the Prince, if driven to despair, was capable of doing any foolish thing, and of all foolish things the public declaration of his marriage with her at this juncture would be the worst. To the Prince it would probably mean ruin; he had already made himself intensely unpopular by his separation from the Princess of Wales. The King was on the side of his daughter-in-law, the people adored her, and the Government was hostile to the Prince. If he now publicly avowed his previous marriage to a Roman Catholic, that marriage, whether legal or illegal, would be regarded as an additional wrong to the Princess of Wales, and public opinion would not brook the scandal. It might be seized upon as a pretext to deprive the Prince of his succession to the throne, and in any event, could not fail to weaken his title. Much though Mrs. Fitzherbert desired that the truth concerning her marriage should be made known, she did not desire it at the cost of the Prince's ruin. And there were others involved as well. The clergyman was dead, but her uncle and her brother who had acted as witnesses to the ceremony were living, and might be subjected to the penalties of *premunire*—banishment and confiscation of property. It may be doubted if public opinion would have tolerated these penalties being enforced; but to Mrs. Fitzherbert's excited imagination, she already saw her relatives ruined and sent out of the country. So far as her brother, Jack Smythe, was concerned, this would not have

mattered much ; he had no property to be confiscated —he was a ne'er-do-well, always worrying his sister for money, and she and the country would be well rid of him. But her uncle, Mr. Errington, was a man of honour and integrity, the owner of large property and an ancient name. She could not bear to think of the possibility of bringing sorrow on his grey hairs, and ruin and disgrace. So she temporised with the Prince. She wrote to him, promising to reconsider the matter, and holding out a hope that she would meet his wishes if he would promise to do nothing until he heard from her again. With this answer the Prince was fain to be satisfied, but he warned her that he would not wait long.

Mrs. Fitzherbert's position was one of great difficulty. Her heart cried one way and her better judgment the other. The Prince's reasoning regarding her marriage vows, illogical though it was, carried great weight with her. She had promised to take him "for better for worse," and though it had been very much for worse, she was not a woman to set her marriage vows lightly aside. She regarded herself as the Prince's true wife by the law of her Church. Still, by the law of the land, she remembered that the Prince of Wales was married to the Princess Caroline, who was legally and beyond all doubt the Princess of Wales ; the mother of his child. In law Mrs. Fitzherbert was nothing more to him than if she had been his mistress, and her soul revolted at such a position. While she was thus hesitating, every influence was brought to bear on her to return to the Prince. Her own family

were strongly in favour of a reconciliation. Several members of the royal family, including all the royal dukes, and the Princesses Augusta and Mary, urged her to rejoin the Prince, and even said it was her duty to do so. Mrs. Fitzherbert was also privately assured of the Queen's countenance and support. (The Queen, indeed, hated the Princess of Wales so much that she would have done anything against her.)

But the approval of the Queen and royal family and of her relatives and friends, was not enough to satisfy Mrs. Fitzherbert in a matter where her conscience was concerned. The subsequent marriage of the Prince had made the question of her return to him one of extreme difficulty; even her spiritual director hesitated to pronounce an opinion upon it. So, after much consideration, Mrs. Fitzherbert resolved to submit the whole case to the judgment of the highest authorities of her Church, and to be guided by their decision. She wrote to the Prince and told him that she must first appeal to Rome, and the Prince, however impatient he might be at this further delay, had again to submit.

But they appear to have met about this time, and local tradition has it that the first meeting between the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert, after their separation in 1794, took place at Kempshott, in Hampshire. Mrs. Fitzherbert went down to Red Rice to consult her uncle, Mr. Errington, and the Prince followed her to Kempshott hard by. A dinner was arranged, at which they were to discuss the terms of their reconciliation, and Mrs. Fitzherbert drove over to Kempshott from

Red Rice. As it was thought that a *tête-à-tête* dinner would be awkward, Sir Henry Rycroft, who owned Kempshott, and was a friend of both of them, was invited to make a third. One would think that the *dîner à trois* must have been still more awkward, especially for Sir Henry. But as he was there *pour les convenances*, he probably knew when to efface himself judiciously.[1]

Shortly after this meeting the Reverend William Nassau, one of the priests of the Roman Catholic church in Warwick Street, the church which Mrs. Fitzherbert attended in London, was commissioned by her to make a special journey to Rome in order to lay her case before the Holy See. It was understood that if permission were granted to her, she would rejoin the Prince of Wales; but if it were refused, she determined to quit England and live abroad; the only way in which she could escape his importunities. The mission to Rome took some time, and meanwhile Mrs. Fitzherbert retired to a small watering-place in Wales, having first obtained from the Prince a promise that he would not follow her there.

At last, Father Nassau returned, and brought with him a Papal Brief, sealed with the seal of the Fisherman. This document declared that the Supreme Pontiff had considered the case of Maria Fitzherbert. He pronounced her to be the wife of the Prince of Wales according to the law of the Church; she was, therefore, free to rejoin her husband if he were truly penitent for his sins and sincere in his promises of amendment. The

[1] I am indebted to Lady Dorothea Rycroft for this story.



MRS FITZHERBERT'S HOUSE IN TILNEY STREET

(As seen from Park Lane)

decision of Rome was intended for Mrs. Fitzherbert's satisfaction alone; it was therefore kept a secret, as the marriage had always been. The Prince had nothing to do with the appeal, though he availed himself of the decision. Nothing would have induced him to admit that he had consented to Rome arbitrating on his behalf. He knew that it would affront beyond measure the Protestant feeling in the country.

The mission to Rome and the decision of the Papal Court on Mrs. Fitzherbert's case must have taken place some time between June 1799 and the end of the year. They were privately reconciled soon after the Brief was received, for in December we find the Prince of Wales writing to her from Carlton House in his usual strain of devotion, and sending her a copy of the will which he had made in her favour nearly four years before.

". . . As to the Paper I have put unto your hands," he writes, "it was with no view of distressing your feelings that I entrusted it to you. That I wished you to be acquainted with the contents I most certainly did, and next to the relief I felt when I had finished it, and which certainly did restore me in a manner to life after a precarious and most dangerous illness, the greatest relief to my heart would be the knowing that you had perused it. . . . Think not, my Angel, that there is one unkind expression about you contained in the whole of it, so, believe me, nothing could be further from the writer's heart and mind both then and now (though it is now within a few days of four years since it was written), and indeed at all times, than a thought

of that nature. How I have ever loved and adored you God only knows, and how I do *now* He also knows, and *you* cannot pretend to be ignorant of or disbelieve. I have no secrets from *you*. . . ."[1]

Though Mrs. Fitzherbert, as soon as she received permission from Rome, became reconciled to the Prince, she did not publicly rejoin him until some time later.[2] At first they only met in private, but soon after the New Year (1800) they began to appear in public together. These meetings occasioned much comment, but they prepared men's minds for the formal reconciliation that was to follow. Lady Jerningham, a Roman Catholic, wrote: "The affair of Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince becomes very incomprehensible; it is a fact that he meets her whenever he can, and a conversation ensues that takes them both out of the company. On Saturday, Lady Kenmare tells me, that Mrs. Fitzherbert, Mrs. Butler, and the Prince were in a high box all night in conversation; the Princess at the Opera and also Lady Jersey. I comprehend it no longer, for I had thought Mrs. Fitzherbert a *woman of principle*."[3]

But before long the bewilderment of Lady Jerningham and Mrs. Fitzherbert's other Roman Catholic friends ceased. Her director saw to that. They were

[1] Extract from a Letter of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to Mrs. Fitzherbert, dated Carlton House, December 11, 1799.

[2] Among the many propitiatory offerings the Prince sent Mrs. Fitzherbert at this time was a small gold bracelet, to which was attached a locket of bloodstone and turquoise. Inside the locket was a painting of his right eye, said to be by Cosway, and the words *Rejoindre ou Mourir* were engraved on the bracelet. This trinket is now in the possession of Lady Horatia Erskine.

[3] "Jerningham Letters," *op. cit.*

given to understand the nature of the communication from Rome, and there was nothing more to be said. By every Roman Catholic in the kingdom, who knew the circumstances, she was regarded as the canonical wife of the Prince of Wales.

In June 1800 Mrs. Fitzherbert was formally and openly reconciled to the Prince. On an appointed day she gave a "public breakfast" at her house in Tilney Street "to meet his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales," and to it she invited all her friends, who came in great numbers. There were white roses everywhere; the rooms and the tables were decorated with them, and the hostess carried a bouquet of the same flowers. This breakfast proclaimed to the fashionable world of London that her relations with the Prince were resumed on the old footing. Mrs. Fitzherbert afterwards told Lord Stourton "she hardly knew how she could summon up resolution to pass that severe ordeal, but she thanked God she had the courage to do so." It certainly required courage, and was perhaps the best way of letting her friends know that she and the Prince were reconciled—a way in keeping with her frank and open nature. But the occasion was hardly one for rejoicing, and, under the circumstances, "a public breakfast" seems in doubtful taste.[1]

The Prince now, as before, let it be known that

[1] Lady Jerningham writes of this breakfast (*June 16, 1800*): "Yesterday I was dreadfully ill all day, a *bad* cold, and I believe a storm in the air. It has dispensed me with going to Mrs. Fitzherbert's Breakfast this morning. George [Jerningham] and his wife are gone with the Chevalier [Jerningham] and the *Kenmares*." —"Jerningham Letters."

Mrs. Fitzherbert should always be invited to any private entertainment which he honoured with his presence, and he quitted two parties abruptly because his wishes had not been complied with. As before, he treated her in public with the most ceremonious respect. Miss Cornelia Knight writes that in November 1800 she was present at a concert at Lady Macartney's, "where I saw the Prince of Wales handing in Mrs. Fitzherbert with all the respect imaginable."[1]

The Prince also, accompanied by Mrs. Fitzherbert, paid visits during the autumn and winter (1800–1801) to members of her family, who welcomed him back to their circle with open arms. He was at Kempshott in November, and at Red Rice. In December with Mrs. Fitzherbert he paid a visit to Sir Carnaby and Lady Haggerston (her brother-in-law and sister) at Grantham. He hunted with the Belvoir hounds, and while at Grantham he paid a visit to his great friend, Mary Isabella, the widowed Duchess of Rutland, who was then living at Belvoir Castle with her son the Duke, a minor. The following letter refers to that visit:—

"GRANTHAM, *Dec.* 28, 1800.

"MY DEAREST DUCHESS,—I cannot help trespassing on your well-known goodness to entreat of you to express to the Duke how sorry I am not to be able to come over to Belvoir to-day, having been much indisposed yesterday and continuing far from well to-day. However, as I understand the Hounds

[1] "Autobiography of Miss Cornelia Knight, late companion of the Princess Charlotte of Wales." London, 1861.

hunt at Barrowby to-morrow, I trust I shall be sufficiently stout to meet them at that cover, as it lays so contiguous to this place, and afterwards to proceed to Belvoir. What I feel most is the disappointment of not enjoying so much of your society as I should have done by passing a day more in the house with *you*. You know me too well, my dearest Friend, to make it necessary for me to add anything more, except how truly I am at all times and under all circumstances, ever your most sincere and attached Friend,

"GEORGE P.

"*P.S.*—Mrs. Fitz. unites with me in everything, my dearest Duchess, that is most kind to you."[1]

Mrs. Fitzherbert's reconciliation to the Prince of Wales was now generally recognised, and the peculiar situation was accepted by their friends with what grace they could muster. Those who objected ceased to be their friends.

It cannot be said that Mrs. Fitzherbert acted precipitately in this matter, or without due consideration. She did not return to the Prince until four years after he had separated from the Princess of Wales, until long after that separation, which she had done nothing to bring about, was an accomplished fact. Even then she only yielded after she had consulted the highest authorities of her Church. She went back to the Prince because she loved him, and because she believed herself

[1] The Duke of Rutland has kindly permitted me to copy this letter (from the original at Belvoir) for the purpose of publication in this book.

to be his wife; there was no other inducement. She was in her forty-fifth year, and, after all she had gone through, she might reasonably have wished for repose; with the Prince, as she well knew, repose was impossible. While she was living apart from him, she had an assured and comfortable income, and she was regarded with respect by all classes of the community. By rejoining the Prince she gained no worldly advantage, she sacrificed her tranquillity, and to some extent her dignity; she made herself a mark for public scandal, and put herself once more in an equivocal position—this time even more equivocal than before, for the Prince by the law of the land was married to another woman of equal birth, who legally shared his rank and dignity, and who had borne him a child. That he had ill-treated the Princess, neglected her, and separated from her, only aggravated the situation. Mrs Fitzherbert was aware how strongly public feeling ran in favour of the Princess of Wales. She knew that if she openly rejoined the Prince without publishing her authority for doing so she would lay her conduct open to the worst constructions. Nevertheless she did not shrink from occupying a position which has well been described as "one of the most extraordinary, in which any woman was ever placed." She listened, in spite of her better judgment, to the pleading of the Prince of Wales, who represented himself to be the victim of a cruel state policy, which had forced him into a loveless union with a Princess who was odious to him. From this point of view there was something

to be said in excuse of the Prince. But there was also the Princess to be considered. Mrs. Fitzherbert could not see that she was doing her a wrong; she reasoned that the Princess did not love the Prince; he could not love her, and nothing would induce him to return to her, whether Mrs. Fitzherbert were reconciled to him or not. She wished the Princess no harm; she was merely availing herself of the prior claim which the Church told her she possessed to the Prince's hand and bed.

Mrs. Fitzherbert insisted that all acquaintance between the Prince and Lady Jersey should be completely broken off before she received him back again. This the Prince promised, for he had rarely seen her since his separation from the Princess of Wales, and had done everything in his power, short of absolute rudeness, to avoid her. But Lady Jersey, though she knew her day was over, was not easily suppressed. Lady Jerningham writes an amusing account of Lady Jersey's behaviour towards the Prince at the Duchess of Devonshire's breakfast at Chiswick, which took place about a month after the "reconciliation breakfast" of Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"We got there a little after three," writes Lady Jerningham, "and were told that the Duchess was in the pleasure ground. We accordingly found her sitting with Mrs. Fitzherbert by an urn. Several bands of musick were very well placed in the garden, so that when you were out of hearing of one band you began to catch the notes of another. Thus harmony always met your ears. This sort of continued concert has always a most pleasant effect

upon my nerves. There was a Temple which was destin'd to the Prince's entertainment, and was very prettily decorated with flowers. There were about twenty covers, and when we understood that the Duchess and all these fine people were in their Temple, we Goths, we took possession of the House, where we found in every room a table spread with cold meat, fruit, ice, and all sorts of wine. It is a fine house, and there are most delightful pictures in it. After the eating and quaffing was over, the young Ladies danced on the green. . . . The Prince was *en polisson*, a brown dress, round hat, and a brown wig. He stood almost the whole time by his band, with Dr. Burney, ordering different pieces of musick. Lady Jersey was coasting round the spot where he stood, with her daughters, Lady Anne Lambton and Lady Elizabeth Villiers (who has not yet been presented, and appears to be quite a girl). The Prince was quite annoyed with her, and eyed her askance; but she is resolved to plague him; she professes it to be her resolution."[1]

At this time Lady Jersey was perhaps the most hated and abused woman in England. She had earned a most unenviable notoriety, and when the Prince threw her over, all classes rejoiced at her downfall. She was generally supposed to have been the cause of the separation between the Prince

1 "Jerningham Letters," Monday, July 7, 1800. One of the last glimpses we get of Lady Jersey is to be found in these letters. By 1813 she was quite deserted by all her admirers, and we find her at Middleton declaring that she cared for "the details of country life and nothing else." She died at Cheltenham, July 25, 1821, predeceasing by a few weeks only her rival, Queen Caroline.

and Princess of Wales. Undoubtedly she embittered their relations, and hastened the crisis, but the separation between a pair so ill-assorted would have come to pass in any case. When Lady Jersey had disappeared, and Mrs. Fitzherbert came back again into the public gaze, some share of the popular execration was directed against the latter. By the ignorant public she was supposed to have taken the place of the discarded mistress, and the renewal of the intimacy between her and the Prince excited great dissatisfaction. Some of this found expression in the press, which in those days was extremely free in dealing with the private affairs of royal personages. It was pointed out that previously to the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales, a final separation had been arranged between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert, and in consideration of this separation a handsome pension was guaranteed to the lady; by accepting the pension Mrs. Fitzherbert accepted the situation, and agreed to leave the field clear for the Princess. By now returning to the Prince she was doing the Princess a great wrong, and by still keeping her pension she was breaking faith with the public. On the surface this argument was plausible enough, but it must be remembered that those who most blamed her action at this juncture were not aware of the tie which bound her to the Prince. They were unaware also that she returned to him with the sanction of her Church, with the approval of many members of the royal family, and at the advice of many of her relatives and friends. Among her friends, however, there were some found to cavil, and there is no doubt

that Mrs. Fitzherbert, by returning to the Prince after his marriage to the Princess of Wales, lost not only her popularity, but to some extent the respect which had been hitherto accorded to her.

The question of right or wrong in this case is one of extraordinary difficulty. Even when we admit that Mrs. Fitzherbert was the canonical wife, the Princess of Wales was the legal consort of the Prince of Wales, and she had rights which should have been respected. It may be pleaded that in ignoring the Princess's rights Mrs. Fitzherbert was only following the dictates of her heart and her conscience; the fact remains that by ignoring them she made a grievous mistake. She made two great mistakes in her life, the first when she married the Prince of Wales in defiance of the law; the second when she went back to him in 1800. The latter mistake was the greater of the two. But it is easy to criticise the conduct of individuals in the light of subsequent events, and perhaps even if Mrs. Fitzherbert had known what the future had in store for her, it would have made no difference. She bought a few more years of happiness, and to her, maybe, they were worth the price she afterwards paid for them in suffering and tears.

CHAPTER II

HAPPY YEARS

(1800–1804)

MRS. FITZHERBERT once told Lord Stourton that "the next eight years were the happiest of her connection with the Prince" (that is the years which followed their reconciliation in 1800). "She used to say that they were extremely poor, but as merry as crickets." Lord Stourton adds, "As a proof of their poverty she told me that once on their returning to Brighton from London they mustered their common means and could not raise £5 between them. Upon this, or some such occasion, she related to me that an old and faithful servant endeavoured to force them to accept £60, which he said he had accumulated in the service of the best of masters and mistresses." The happy relations which existed between the Prince and his dependants have been already mentioned. As to Mrs. Fitzherbert, the devotion of her servants was boundless; they remained with her for years, and grew grey in her service.

The expression "extremely poor" must be taken as relative. The Prince's income was burdened with the debts which had embarrassed him in the past, and were still accumulating in the present, to embarrass him in the future. Even so, he always

found money for his pleasures, and for the extensive alterations which he was continually carrying out at Carlton House and the Pavilion. Mrs. Fitzherbert had her own jointure, and the annuity guaranteed to her at the time of her separation from the Prince. As she had now rejoined him, that annuity was probably not paid regularly, but whenever she was in money difficulties the Prince was always ready to help her out of them. In the years that immediately followed their reconciliation the Prince's devotion seemed to grow greater every day. Everything he had was at her disposal, and had Mrs. Fitzherbert been an interested person (which she was not), she might have laid up a handsome fortune against the inevitable day when the fickle Prince should once more change. She did not at this time contemplate the possibility of any change in his affections, for they lived together in unbroken harmony, delighted to be with one another again. Only the shadow of the Prince's unfortunate political marriage fell across the sunshine of their lives. Mrs. Fitzherbert carefully kept a judicious silence on this unhappy subject, and abstained from the slightest allusion to it. The Prince was not so reticent. "The greatest interruptions to their happiness at that period," Mrs. Fitzherbert told Lord Stourton, "were his bitter and passionate regrets, and self-accusations for his conduct, which she always met by saying, 'We must look to the present and the future, and not think of the past.'"

Mrs. Fitzherbert continued on terms of friendship and intimacy with the royal family, espe-

duct. Such correspondence was always maintained by verbal messages. She always endeavoured to avoid interfering in politics; but at one time, she furthered the earnest wish of the Father to prevent the Son from attending at a Newmarket meeting. At another time, when the greatest coolness subsisted between the Father and the Son, who was not even spoken to at court, she obtained from the King (knowing how much the Prince suffered from this extreme coolness) a promise to speak with kindness to the Prince, who returned from court in the highest spirits, unaware of the person to whom he was indebted."[1]

With the Duke of Kent her relations were also very friendly. This Prince had lived a great deal abroad. He had been educated in Germany and Switzerland, a victim to the mistaken notions of the King, who did not think an English education was good for an English Prince. He was then sent to various places in the colonies, and given a very inadequate allowance, with the result that he, through no fault of his own, became financially embarrassed. He returned to England in 1799, and renewed his acquaintance with Mrs. Fitzherbert. She gave him a warm welcome home, which contrasted with the coldness and indifference he met with from the King and Queen. The Duke was of a generous and an affectionate disposition, and he never forgot her kindness. Not only did he frequently visit her, but he entered into a correspondence with her, as friendly, if not so

[1] Langdale, *op. cit.*



THE DUKE OF KENT

intimate, as that which she conducted with the Duke of York.[1]

Soon after Mrs. Fitzherbert's reconciliation to the Prince of Wales, her house in Tilney Street was enlarged by the addition of the one next it. The two houses were thrown into one, and made a spacious mansion, more adapted to her changed requirements. She gave up her villa at Castle Hill, Ealing, for it was associated with the saddest period of her life, and the Duke of Kent took over the remainder of the lease In its place she took East End House, Parson's Green, Fulham. Mrs. Fitzherbert altered this house considerably, and improved the garden. Here she resided, off and on, for several years[2]

Even during these years, which Mrs. Fitzherbert described as the happiest of her life with the Prince, their domestic peace and happiness was continually broken by difficulties which arose out of the Prince's political and domestic affairs. In 1801 the King again fell alarmingly ill, and symptoms of the old malady showed themselves. Dr. Willis was called in, but at first even his skill availed nothing, and the King's reason and life were de-

[1] The correspondence between Mrs Fitzherbert and the Duke of York *(which touched upon political as well as family matters)* was destroyed after his death She preserved many of the Duke of Kent's letters, they were found among her papers I am permitted by His Majesty the King to quote from this collection sundry letters of the Duke of Kent which will be found in this book They will serve to show the respect in which Mrs Fitzherbert was held, not only by the Duke, but by all the royal family.

[2] East End House was burned down in 1884 It was originally built in 1699 by Sir Francis Child, Lord Mayor of London, and founder of Child's Bank

intimate, as that which she conducted with the Duke of York.[1]

Soon after Mrs Fitzherbert's reconciliation to the Prince of Wales, her house in Tilney Street was enlarged by the addition of the one next it. The two houses were thrown into one, and made a spacious mansion, more adapted to her changed requirements. She gave up her villa at Castle Hill, Ealing, for it was associated with the saddest period of her life, and the Duke of Kent took over the remainder of the lease In its place she took East End House, Parson's Green, Fulham. Mrs. Fitzherbert altered this house considerably, and improved the garden Here she resided, off and on, for several years[2]

Even during these years, which Mrs. Fitzherbert described as the happiest of her life with the Prince, their domestic peace and happiness was continually broken by difficulties which arose out of the Prince's political and domestic affairs. In 1801 the King again fell alarmingly ill, and symptoms of the old malady showed themselves. Dr. Willis was called in, but at first even his skill availed nothing, and the King's reason and life were de-

[1] The correspondence between Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Duke of York (which touched upon political as well as family matters) was destroyed after his death She preserved many of the Duke of Kent's letters, they were found among her papers. I am permitted by His Majesty the King to quote from this collection [illegible] of the Duke of Kent which will be found in this book. They will serve to show the respect in which Mrs. Fitzherbert was held not only by the Duke, but by all the royal family.

[2] East End House was burned down in [illegible]. It was originally built in 1699 by Sir Francis Child, Lord Mayor of London and founder of Child's Bank.

clared to be in danger. This state of affairs naturally brought the Prince of Wales forward, and the Regency question was once more in the air. The Prince behaved with great decorum; he engaged in no intrigue, did not see Fox, and Mrs. Fitzherbert remained quite in the background. Even so the court party attacked him and endeavoured to misrepresent him; they said he behaved rudely to the Queen, and used "shocking language" about the King. It is no wonder that the Prince became restive under such misrepresentation. However, before long the crisis passed, the King became better—for a time.

In 1803 the Peace, or rather truce, of Amiens came to a violent end, and war again broke out with France. In England martial ardour and patriotic feeling were raised to the highest pitch. Throughout the kingdom was heard the noise of military preparations; volunteer associations were formed, immense sums of money were subscribed, and persons of high rank did not think it beneath them to serve as private soldiers, if commissions were not forthcoming. Every able-bodied man in England was eager to shed his blood for his country, now threatened with invasion by the dreaded "Bonaparte." Only one man was forbidden to take any share in his country's defence, and that one was the heir-apparent. He was nominally a colonel of dragoons, but he was not allowed by the King to take any active part on the plea of his rank, though his next brother, the Duke of York, was Commander-in-Chief, and military commands of the highest importance were bestowed

on his younger brothers. The Prince of Wales addressed impassioned appeals to be allowed to bear arms in the defence of his country to the Prime Minister, Addington, who could only refer him to the King. The King met them all with a blunt refusal. The Prince then carried on an animated and voluminous correspondence with the Duke of York, but the Duke, as Commander-in-Chief, on this occasion threw in his lot with the King. This produced a coolness between the two brothers, and it inflamed the Prince of Wales's mind still further against the King. He went about everywhere repeating his favourite expression that his father "hated him"; and he declared that the King forced this inaction upon him with the object of exposing him "to the obloquy of being regarded by the country as passing my time indifferent to the events which menace it, and insensible to the call of patriotism, much more to glory." The Prince's indignation was genuine, and he had a right to be indignant. The King's refusal was in fact part of a set plan to insult, humiliate, and misrepresent the heir-apparent on every possible occasion. In this instance the Prince spoilt his father's tactics by getting his friends to bring the question before the House of Commons, where it was made a subject of prolonged debate. Not content with this, the Prince took the unusual and unwise step of publishing the whole of the correspondence which had passed on the subject[1]—the King's letters, his own letters, the Duke of York's letters, and the Prime Minister's. The effect on the King of this publication was

[1] In the *Morning Chronicle*, December 7, 1803

beyond what he could express in words; he regarded it as the crowning affront offered to him by his undutiful son. "He has published *my* letters! he has published *my* letters!" the King kept repeating, as though no more was needed to express the depths of his iniquity. Throughout this fierce family feud Mrs. Fitzherbert tried to pour balm on the wounded feelings of all concerned. She sought to mitigate the Prince's wrath against the King, or at least to check its public expression. It was she who prevented an open break between the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, though her sympathies seem to have been with the latter, for she admitted that "the Duke of York always acted beautifully." She knew how deeply attached the brothers were to each other, and she laboured hard to remove any and every misunderstanding between them which arose from the injudicious preference of the King. She came generally to be regarded by the royal family as a peacemaker and mediator. The Prince of Wales would often listen to her calm and reasoned words when he would listen to no one else, for he knew her to be absolutely disinterested, and after violent protests to the contrary he would come round to her way of thinking.

Even in such a delicate matter as his relations with the Princess of Wales, Mrs. Fitzherbert intervened with good results, and for a few years at least the ill-mated pair were content to live without annoying one another unnecessarily. Open discord and public scandal were avoided, and the world had come to recognise their separation as inevitable. The Prince and Princess of Wales occasionally met

at the King's drawing-rooms, and greeted one another with ceremonious courtesy. The Princess was regarded with ill-concealed aversion by Queen Charlotte and many of the Princesses: on the other hand the King was her friend, the Dukes of Kent and Sussex occasionally visited her, and the Duchess of York treated her with courtesy and scarcely veiled sympathy. The Princess of Wales was living at Montague House, Blackheath, where she entertained in a very informal way a good deal of company, some of whom she would have been better without. She did not manage her own affairs; her bills were all sent in to Carlton House to be paid. This arrangement did not work well, for the Princess, though not extravagant where her own needs were concerned, was very careless about money matters, very generous, and very easily imposed upon. Her almsgiving was indiscriminate, her tradesmen charged whatever they pleased, and her servants robbed her, with the result that her affairs soon became confused. The Prince appointed a Colonel Thomas as a sort of comptroller of her household, or rather of her bills. This did not mend matters, for in business matters Thomas was incapable, and the Princess disliked him, for she thought he was a sort of spy on her actions. Difficulties arose between the Princess and Thomas, which exasperated the Prince; and as he refused to communicate directly with the Princess, affairs became more and more involved. In this dilemma, Mrs. Fitzherbert suggested that the Duke of Kent, who was on friendly terms with the Princess, should try to arrange matters. The Prince agreed, and

gave the Duke of Kent full power to do what he liked, provided he were not troubled further. The Duke of Kent, who was very conscientious and painstaking, found that the Princess's complaints against Thomas were quite justified, and he recommended his dismissal. The Duke was a little dubious how the Prince (who never would believe that the Princess could be right about anything) would take it, and he wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert:—

H.R.H. the Duke of Kent to Mrs. Fitzherbert, Tilney Street.

"CASTLE HILL LODGE, *November* 21, 1801.

"MY DEAREST MRS. FITZHERBERT,—Having had occasion, in a letter I wrote this day to Admiral Payne, acquainting him for the Prince's information with the particulars of my visit to Blackheath, to speak my sentiments in union with those of the Princess, upon the inutility of Colonel Thomas's services to her, which, from conviction, I thought it my duty to do, I entreat your good offices with my brother, for whom you know my warm attachment, so as to prevent his taking offence at my sincerity and openness on this point, upon which I know he has formed another opinion.

"But I really felt it a duty incumbent on me, as the person employed by him to put the Princess's affairs under certain regulations, to point out that the Colonel was in every respect unfit for the business, and that the plan could not go on without a more capable person to direct it. I trust it will need no great exertion to convince the Prince of my zeal in his service, of my fidelity in the discharge of the

duty he has entrusted me with, or of my firm friendship. But as I am aware, that on this point I have been compelled, from a sense of what in honour I owed him, to speak a little against what I knew to be *his* sentiments, I am apprehensive that, at the first outset, it *may* put him in a little ill-humour with me, and to prevent this continuing is the object of my thus intruding upon *you*. Permit me therefore to hope you will assist me in convincing the Prince that I have acted only from the sense of the duty I owe *him*, and from what, in honour and conscience, I felt I should act like a scoundrel, if I did not candidly state.

"I shall not trespass longer upon your time, than just to assure you that I shall ever be happy when I can be permitted to subscribe myself with sincere regard, your truly devoted and faithful servant,

"EDWARD."

Mrs. Fitzherbert intervened and blunted the edge of the Prince's anger. Colonel Thomas was relieved of his duties, which were placed in the hands of a more capable person, and the Princess of Wales was duly grateful. She felt no jealousy of Mrs. Fitzherbert—an extraordinary situation, truly, for them both.

Unfortunately all the unhappy disputes between the Prince and Princess of Wales did not end so satisfactorily. Bitter quarrels presently arose concerning the custody and education of the Princess Charlotte, now a bright and intelligent child of seven or eight years old. She already showed signs of a high spirit, an affectionate disposition, and a

generous temper; though in appearance she resembled her father, in temperament she was the daughter of her mother, to whom she was devotedly attached. The poor little Princess was in a difficult position; her father and mother were at war with one another, her grandmother was at war with her mother, and her grandfather at war with her father, and she was the object on which all their quarrels centred. To do the old King justice he was quick to see the harmful effect these family disputes must have on the child, and he resolved to take her education into his own hands. The Prince of Wales at first seemed to consent to this, then he resented it, and complained that he was treated as though he were not a fit person to be entrusted with the training of his daughter. He certainly was not. He had learned that the Princess of Wales was to have free access to her daughter at all times, when it should not interfere with her studies, and that the King was determined to do nothing to hurt the feelings of his "dearest daughter-in-law and niece," and to uphold on all occasions "her authority as a mother." The little Princess made no concealment of her preference. She was asked to a children's party at Windsor Castle, and being told that she might bring a friend, she instantly named her mother. All this, natural enough in the child, was resented by her father, and though he was devoted to children, he frequently treated his daughter with harshness. Consequently the little Princess grew to dread the interviews with her father, while those with her mother, who petted and spoiled her, were a delight.

In the end the Prince had to give way, and the

King appointed the Dowager Lady de Clifford[1] and the Bishop of Exeter to undertake the care and education of the Princess Charlotte. Lady de Clifford had seen much of the French court; she was a woman of fine character, charming and gracious. She was a friend and neighbour of Mrs. Fitzherbert (she lived in South Audley Street, just round the corner from Tilney Street). On one occasion we find the Prince writing to his "dearest Lady de Clifford" (March 1, 1805) excusing himself from going to see "your little charge and you," on the plea of urgent business. He added, "If you wish for me late this evening, I mean to say between eleven and twelve o'clock, you know *where to find me.*" This was at Mrs. Fitzherbert's house in Tilney Street, where the Prince was wont to sup. Whether Lady de Clifford went there to see him deponent sayeth not, but the Prince's suggestion shows the curious intimacy that existed between all the parties. Yet this intimacy did not prevent the Prince later from using language to Lady de Clifford which the King declared "he could not sanction." One must not take these people and their quarrels too seriously. No doubt they understood one another better than it is possible for us to understand them. Mrs. Fitzherbert appears in the matter of the Princess Charlotte, as in others, as using her best endeavours to promote peace. She prayed the Prince to show more affection to his daughter. The Prince was naturally attached to her, but, embittered by constant

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disputes, and by the child's marked preference for her mother, he considered it his duty to treat her with coldness. Mrs. Fitzherbert loved children, and often at this time saw the Princess Charlotte, who became much attached to her. "Upon one occasion Mrs. Fitzherbert told me," writes Lord Stourton, "she was much affected by the Princess Charlotte's throwing her arms around her neck and beseeching her to speak to her father that he would receive her with greater marks of affection; and she told me that she could not help weeping with this interesting child."[1] In this connection we may quote here an unpublished letter which the Princess wrote to her father when she was twelve years old:[2]—

H.R.H. the Princess Charlotte to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

"*December* 16, 1808.

"MY DEAREST PAPA,—I cannot resist writing to thank you for the very kind little remembrance you were so good as to send me by Lady Essex. She gave us a full account of the entertainments going on at the Pavilion. I could not help wishing I had been there—how happy should I have been to have seen you.

"I long to hear when you intend coming to London. When is this likely, pray tell me? I assure you I will endeavour to please you in every-

[1] Langdale, *op. cit.*

[2] This letter was found among Mrs. Fitzherbert's papers. It was doubtless given to her by the Prince of Wales, and may have been connected with her well-meant efforts to establish better relations between him and his daughter.

thing, and I hope you will find me improved in my learning, and in goodness.

"I am, my dearest Papa, your ever aff^{te} and dutiful daughter,

"CHARLOTTE."

The Princess of Wales raised no obstacle to Mrs. Fitzherbert's seeing her daughter; but the fact of these meetings leaked out, and great objection was taken by some persons whom it in no way concerned. The objection, curiously enough, did not arise from Mrs. Fitzherbert's anomalous position with the Prince, but from her religion. Before long, the rumour was started that she was trying to convert the little Princess to Popery, and many false and scurrilous paragraphs found their way into the press. The cartoonist also was not idle. One of them set forth a parody of a well-known picture entitled "The Guardian Angel conducting the soul of a child to heaven." The cartoon, dated April 2, 1805, portrays Mrs. Fitzherbert equipped with wings, with the Princess in her arms, soaring aloft from the Brighton Pavilion to a flower-bedecked altar; her lap is filled with a breviary and images of the saints, as playthings for the Princess; the leading members of the Whig party, such as Stanhope, Grenville, Grey, Erskine, Sheridan, and Fox, appear as attendant cherubim.

Nothing could be more unfair or untrue than the suggestion conveyed in this cartoon, for Mrs. Fitzherbert never tried to "convert" any one, high or low; but its publication had the effect of checking

the meetings between herself and the Princess Charlotte, which thereafter became few and far between.

The ceaseless disputes with his family, combined with the failure of his political schemes, frequently made the Prince ill. Early in 1804, when he was at Brighton, he was seized with one of those sudden and mysterious attacks to which he was subject all his life. He treated it, as usual, with profuse bleeding, which afforded him relief, but brought him so low, that for a time he seems to have been in danger of his life. Mrs. Fitzherbert, contrary to her rule, took up her lodging at the Pavilion in order that she might be nearer the Prince, and she nursed him night and day with unremitting devotion. Throughout the Prince's illness, she unofficially informed the Queen of his progress through the Duke of Kent, who wrote to her every day to inquire after the Prince's health. One of his many letters to her at this time may be quoted here :—

H.R.H. the Duke of Kent to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"KENSINGTON PALACE,
Saturday, February 4, 1804.

"MY DEAREST MRS. FITZHERBERT,—I cannot find words sufficient to express the joy I derived from your most kind letter of last evening, by which I have received so comfortable an account of the dear Prince. It has relieved me from an immense weight, as yesterday I must confess I felt quite heart-broken about him. Pray say everything most affectionate from me, and add that nothing could be kinder than the interest expressed both by

the Queen and all our sisters about him I request, though I have not the pleasure of personally knowing Sir Walter,[1] that you will express how grateful *I* feel to him for the care he has taken of the Prince, and the attachment he has evinced for him, on the present occasion

"I have consulted with the Duke of Clarence about proper quarters for the Prince on his return to Town, and he instantly said he would *not* suffer him to go to *any* but *his*, so that this point is settled If the noise should be troublesome, it will be obviated immediately by putting straw on the adjoining pavement

"All is going on well with K[ing][2] much as when I last wrote, the *hurry* is less than it was some days back, but still exists we are still in a precarious state, but the physician told me an hour ago, unless anything suddenly occurred to effect a change for the worse, the balance was in the favour of his patient

"Pray accept of the assurance of my unalterable friendship and esteem, and believe me ever to be, my dearest Mrs Fitzherbert, most faithfully and devotedly yours, EDWARD"

On the Prince's recovery, Mrs Fitzherbert devoted herself to bring about a reconciliation between the Prince and his parents With the Queen, with whom he had quarrelled at the time of his father's illness in 1801, it was comparatively easy, she was

[1] Sir Walter Farquhar, Mrs. Fitzherbert's physician

[2] The King was at this time very ill also, with a return of his old malady after 1801 these attacks became increasingly frequent

always ready to make allowances for her son, and they were reconciled a few months later; but with the King, whose mind was partially unhinged, it was more difficult. The King proposed a meeting of reconciliation and then postponed it; he could not bring himself to forgive the Prince's publication of his letters. It was not until November 1804 that an interview took place between the father and son, in the presence of the Queen, the Duke and Duchess of York, and several of the Princesses. The Prince was very ill at ease, and those who saw the meeting predicted that "it is quite impossible that this reconciliation can last." It did not last, but it called a truce in the family strife, and that was something gained.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCE'S PLEASURE-HOUSE

(1800–1808)

If Mrs. Fitzherbert's happiest years were those which followed her reconciliation to the Prince in 1800, the happiest hours of them without doubt were those which she spent with him at Brighton. It must have been there that they were "merry as crickets," for, when the Prince came to his lordly pleasure-house at Brighton, he left cares and worries behind him, and abandoned himself to the joys of the passing hour. Mrs. Fitzherbert had not been to Brighton for five or six years. The townsfolk rejoiced to see her among them again; they associated her more than any one else with Brighton's prosperity, for it was her liking for the place which had in past years drawn the Prince thither so often. At the time of the separation, none lamented more than the people of Brighton the breach between Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince, none execrated Lady Jersey more than they. When Mrs. Fitzherbert's little house near the Pavilion was closed, and rumour went forth that she would come no more, they felt that half their glory had departed. When, therefore, she came back with the Prince in the summer of 1801, expressions of joy and satisfaction were heard on all sides,

and the phrase "Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince" resumed all its old attraction. The fact that during the interval the Prince had been provided with a Princess, who shared his dignities, and was the mother of his child, made no difference to the warmth of Mrs. Fitzherbert's welcome back to Brighton; nor did it affect her position there. Whatever the cause of this unhappy state of the Prince's domestic affairs, it was felt that she was not to blame. The cheers which greeted Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince on their first appearance on the Steine were loud and long. They were perhaps not altogether disinterested, for there had been rumours that, with his changed circumstances, the Prince would see less of Brighton. Now that he was with Mrs. Fitzherbert again, it was felt that the town was assured of all the benefits of his patronage for many a long day.

The general feeling of satisfaction was deepened by the news that the Prince, so far from abandoning Brighton, intended to spend more time there than before. It became known that he was purchasing land around the Pavilion with a view to extending the grounds, and that the palace was to be improved and enlarged. A great deal of building went on in Brighton during the years 1801–4. The Prince spent some of the money he obtained from Parliament after his marriage on decorating and enlarging his Pavilion at Brighton. While the alterations were in progress, we read, "several pieces on very beautiful Chinese paper" were presented to the Prince, and these suggested to him the famous Chinese gallery. The idea was duly carried out,

and the gallery was decorated with dragons, lanterns, pagodas, and figures supposed to be peculiar to China. Herein may be traced the origin of the so-called Eastern decoration of the Pavilion. The Prince extended this style to its architecture, with the result that there gradually arose the grotesque and incongruous, though not altogether unlovely, building which visitors to Brighton wonder at to-day. The bewildering mixture of styles in its architecture arose from the varying moods of the wayward Prince. We learn that originally something of the building was Grecian and something was Gothic, but the central dome, or Rotunda, resembles a Turkish mosque; the pinnacles are Moorish if anything; one part seems to be Egyptian, another Chinese, and another to be reminiscent of Hindustan. The Prince called his house "Oriental," and with that general term it may be left to rest. A contemporary writer has described the Pavilion as "a nondescript monster in buildings. It appears like a mad house, or a house run mad, as it has neither beginning, middle, nor end." The alterations of the Pavilion never ceased until the death of George IV., and even William IV. added the north gate. The Pavilion may be seen to-day, as Thackeray says, "for sixpence," restored to much of its pristine splendour; the Chinese gallery; the music-room, with its gorgeous frescoes, and green and golden dragons; the yellow drawing-room, with its oriental colonnades; the saloon, or rotunda; and above all the banqueting-room, with its domed ceiling representing an Eastern sky. Against this sky is painted a gigantic palm spreading its

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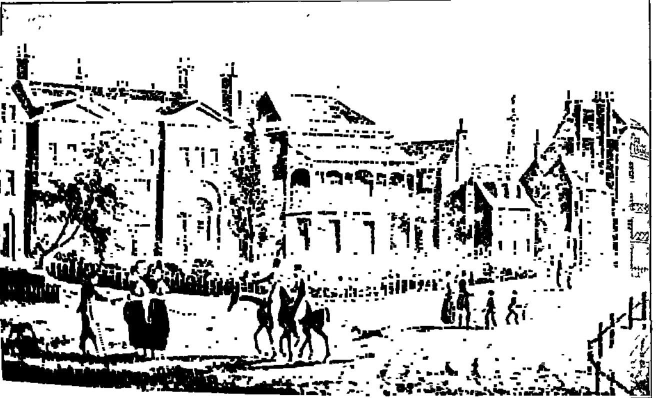
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foliage, fruit, and flower, and beneath it floats a fiery dragon, bearing in its claws a magnificent crystal chandelier.[1] These rooms are now dismantled of furniture, and the merry reckless crowd that filled them with life and movement are dead and gone, nearly a century ago, but otherwise they are unchanged from what they were in the Georgian days.

The decorations and alterations which transformed the Pavilion from a pleasant seaside residence into a semi-oriental palace, were chiefly carried out during this period (1801–4); they involved a great deal of pulling down, both in the Pavilion itself and in the adjoining buildings. Among the houses that disappeared was the small house which Mrs. Fitzherbert had occupied previously to her rupture with the Prince in 1794. It therefore became necessary that she should have a new residence in Brighton, as she always declined to live in the Pavilion. A suitable site was found close to the Pavilion on the Steine, and there she built her house, which was known as Steine House, or more generally as "the mansion of Mrs. Fitzherbert."[2] The house was large, roomy, and comfortable, though not magnificent enough to be called a mansion in the modern

[1] To some the principal interest of the Pavilion centres in the private apartments of George IV., which consist of a library, bedroom, bath, sitting, and dressing rooms. These rooms are on the ground floor, and look over the Pavilion lawns. They are of moderate size, and very little remains of their former splendour; the only remaining evidence of it being the bathroom of pure white marble, a great luxury in those days.

[2] The Lords of the Manor granted the ground to Mrs. Fitzherbert in 1803, and the following year the house was built.



A VIEW OF THE STEINE, BRIGHTON, *temp.* 1815

SHOWING MRS. FITZHERBERT'S HOUSE

acceptation of the term. The house faced the Steine, separated from it by a little garden. The entrance was at the side. An outer hall led to an inner hall, and this opened on to two spacious rooms on the ground floor, the library and dining-room. A handsome double staircase led to the drawing-rooms on the first floor; there too were Mrs. Fitzherbert's boudoir and bedroom. Behind these again was a small oratory. The chief feature of the house was the wide, covered balcony or verandah, which ran the whole length of the front of the house, and commanded a fine view of the Steine and the sea beyond.[1] Access to it was from the drawing-rooms on the first floor. On this balcony Mrs. Fitzherbert spent much of her time; here when the weather was fine she received her friends, and sat chatting with them over a "dish of tea" or looking down on the ever-changing scene below. All Brighton walked, rode, or drove on the Steine in those days, and on the level open spaces, which are now gardens, divers entertainments took place—auctions, rustic sports, drilling of the militia, betting-rings in race week, Punch and Judy shows, and the playing of military bands.

The Prince of Wales was often to be seen upon Mrs. Fitzherbert's balcony, especially of a morning. He would sit there talking to her by the hour together; sometimes he would honour with a bow or a smile some one of his acquaintance passing on the Steine below. How he got there was a mystery to

[1] The view of the sea was much less interrupted by houses then than now.

many. He was rarely seen to pass backwards and forwards between Mrs. Fitzherbert's house and the Pavilion. He must have had a private way, and the fact that he was so seldom seen to enter her house or to leave it, and yet appeared so often on the balcony, gave rise to the report that Mrs. Fitzherbert's house and the Pavilion were connected by an underground passage. If such a passage existed it was kept a profound secret during their lifetime; none of the retainers knew of it, and to-day every trace of it, either at the Pavilion or at Mrs. Fitzherbert's house, has disappeared, though at different times there have been rumours of its discovery.[1] The Prince, for some reason of his own, had an underground passage made which led directly from his private apartments at the Pavilion to his stables and riding-school, now known as the Dome. This passage exists to-day, but it leads in an opposite direction to Mrs. Fitzherbert's house, which is at the south side of the Pavilion, whereas the Dome is at the north. On the whole, since no trace of it can be discovered, the story of an underground

[1] Mrs. Fitzherbert's house at Brighton was sold by public auction in 1838, about a year after her death. Since then it has passed through several hands. The late Judge Turner resided there for many years. Then it was rented by the Civil and United Service Club, who made many internal alterations. During their tenancy it was said that the entrance of the secret passage had been discovered. A stone trap led to a vault or passage which was choked up with rubbish, but it seemed to lead nowhere. The house is now occupied by the Young Men's Christian Association, who have made further alterations to meet their requirements. It seems a pity that this fine house, so interesting in its historical associations, could not be acquired by the municipality of Brighton, and converted to some public use as a memorial of Mrs. Fitzherbert—the woman to whom Brighton owes so much. At present, not even her picture marks the walls of the house where she died.

passage between the Pavilion and Mrs. Fitzherbert's house must be dismissed as doubtful. The Prince, who loved mystery, might well have suggested such a thing, but Mrs. Fitzherbert, who preferred everything open and above ground, would have been hardly likely to consent to it. Besides, why should there be any secrecy? Her relations with the Prince were well known; there surely was no occasion for a man to make a mystery about going to see his wife.

From the time Mrs. Fitzherbert's house was finished, she made Brighton her principal residence; that is to say, she spent many months there every year, and she regarded Brighton as a home. She interested herself in promoting the prosperity of the town, and gave largely to the local charities without distinction of creed. She spent Christmas there in 1802, and the local paper writes (December [illegible], 1802), "The charitable donations, and willing assistance which Mrs. Fitzherbert has bestowed, and continues to bestow, on the unfortunate individuals of this place have endeared her to the inhabitants of every description."

Coincident with the building of Mrs. Fitzherbert's house a wave of prosperity [illegible] over Brighton. The town [illegible] east so far as the Royal Crescent, where a [illegible] of the Prince, now removed by an [illegible] generation, graced the green [illegible] westward as far as what was then [illegible] now Regency Square, and [illegible] St. Nicholas's Church, which had [illegible] in green fields. New [illegible]

theatres and other places of amusement built, and fashionable physicians multiplied by the score. The town was thronged with distinguished visitors, who spent their money freely; houses and lodgings were at a premium, and trade was at its briskest. How could good Brightonians do anything but reverence those personages who brought them all these good things? Carlton House has been called "a very Pandora's box of vice and profligacy," but no such charge was ever brought against the Pavilion—at least in Brighton. Mrs. Fitzherbert's presence there as the reigning lady was considered a guarantee of its respectability, and whatever charges might be brought against the Prince elsewhere, in Brighton he could do no wrong.

We get many glimpses of life at the Pavilion during these years, and though the Prince and his companions were full of high spirits, and indulged in many pranks and practical jokes, and though there was sometimes hard-drinking after the manner of the time, yet it is never recorded that there was any serious lapse from decorum. Of course many stories were circulated; for there are people who see harm in the most innocent amusement; but few of these stories will bear investigation, and many of of them were grossly exaggerated. Life at the Pavilion was merry enough to be sure, but it was not necessarily evil on that account. Within those "Oriental halls" the green and golden dragons looked down on many a curious scene; there was an endless succession of dinner-parties, concerts, balls, card-parties, and theatricals. Bacchus and Venus, Terpsichore and Melpomene were all

honoured in turn, and stray grains of incense were thrown on the altars of Minerva and Mars. The Prince was passionately fond of music, his life appears to have been set to its strains; at Brighton his private band played twice daily, in the morning in the Pavilion grounds, in the evening indoors. The Prince suffered from what has been called a "superfoetation of activity"; he could never rest at Brighton. Perhaps the air had something to do with it. Inside the Pavilion there was always something going on—outside there were reviews, naval displays, races, cricket-matches, bathing and boating, donkey rides and water-parties without end. A local chronicler informs us: "It is *tonish* to indulge in water-parties before dinner; five or six people hire a boat and sail and paddle like the Phoenicians on the skirt of the shore. The senior mistress of the bath, Martha Gunn, makes a good *report* of her practice. The long-eared palfreys are still the favourites of the ladies; and Angels on Jerusalem ponies are no novelty." The Prince, though he was now middle-aged, was still a boy at heart, and often joined in these water-parties. Mrs. Fitzherbert joined in them too at his desire, though one would think she lost something of her dignity on such occasions.

Another of the Prince's freaks was to sup occasionally in the kitchen. These entertainments were of the nature of "surprise parties." The Prince, wearying of his state, would adjourn with all his company from the gorgeous banqueting-rooms to the kitchens and spend a merry hour. The following is a description of one of these "royal

freaks" which happened rarely: "A scarlet cloth was thrown over the pavement; a splendid repast was provided, and the good-humoured Prince sat down with a select party of his friends, and spent a joyous hour. The whole of the servants, particularly the *female portion,* were delighted with this mark of royal condescension." "The royal condescension" became known, and formed the subject of many scurrilous paragraphs which the "royal freak" did not justify. It was all very merry, very foolish, perhaps, but who shall say that there was any harm in it?

The gaiety within the Pavilion communicated itself to the gay town outside, which became a veritable city of pleasure. The great popular festivities during these years were the celebrations of the Prince's birthday (August 12). This auspicious day was always celebrated at Brighton as a public holiday; oxen were roasted whole, bands played on the Steine and in the Pavilion grounds from morning till night, popular sports took place on the Level, such as donkey races, running and jumping in sacks, sparring matches, &c. In the evening there were bonfires and fireworks, and the whole town was illuminated. In truth those were brave days, and Brighton will never see their like again. The Steine was then at its meridian of glory; the world of fashion resorted thither daily, with the Prince of Wales at its head. Who shall describe the brilliant attire of the ladies on these promenades? and in those days the men ran them close. In dress the Prince was supreme, and his clothes were more

[illegible]

[illegible] how [illegible]

[illegible] Kingdoms [illegible]

but how [illegible]

the Powers [illegible]

There [illegible]

[illegible]

eminent lawyer was nothing of a courtier. "Yo father, sir," he growled, "will always be popular long as he goes to church on Sunday, and remai faithful to that ugly woman, your mother; b you, sir, will never be popular." The Prince bo with "old gruffy" because he was so useful him. Indeed, he combined business with pleasu at his Pavilion parties, and many were the po ticians and pamphleteers who came to Brighto and were entertained at the Pavilion. Th Prince always asked all those, however obscur who might be useful to him in some capacity o other.

Among the many who came to Brighton at th time (in September 1805) was the now famou Thomas Creevey,[1] and his wife and her daughter: Creevey was a devoted follower of Fox, and th Prince knew of him as a needy politician wh had a vote. Creevey wrote down his name at th Pavilion, and the Prince sent him the usual invitatio to dinner. Creevey went, and thus describes hi visit: "Mrs. Fitzherbert, whom I had never been in a room with before, sat on one side of the Princ with the Duke of Clarence on the other. . . . In th course of the evening the Prince took me up to th card-table where Mrs. Fitzherbert was playing and said, 'Mrs. Fitzherbert, I wish you would call upon Mrs. Creevey and say from me I shall be happy to see her here.'"[2]

The Creeveys were at Brighton for four months,

[1] Thomas Creevey, M.P. (1768–1838), a selection from whose papers, edited by Sir Herbert Maxwell, was published, 1903, under the title of "The Creevey Papers."

[2] "The Creevey Papers," vol. i. pp. 47, 48.

and frequently dined at the Pavilion. Creevey writes: "We used to dine pretty punctually at six, the average number being about sixteen. . . . Mrs. Fitzherbert always dined there, and mostly one other lady—Lady Downshire very often, sometimes Lady Clare, or Lady Berkeley, or Mrs. Creevey. Mrs. Fitzherbert was a great card-player, and played every night. The Prince never touched a card, and was occupied in talking to his guests, and very much in listening to and giving directions to his band. At 12 o'clock punctually the band stopped, and sandwiches and wine and water were handed about, and shortly after the Prince made his bow, and we all dispersed. I had heard a good deal of the Prince's drinking, but during the time I speak of, I never saw him the least drunk but once." . . .

Creevey goes on to say:—

"It used to be the Duke of Norfolk's[1] custom to come over every year from Arundel to pay his respects to the Prince and pass two days at Brighton, on both of which he always dined at the Pavilion. In the year 1804, upon this annual visit, the Prince had drunk so much as to be made very seriously ill by it, so that in 1805 (the year that I was there), when the Duke came, Mrs. Fitzherbert, who was always the Prince's best friend, was very much afraid of his being again made ill, and she persuaded the Prince to adopt different stratagems to avoid drinking with the Duke. I dined there on both days, and letters were brought in each day after

[1] The eleventh Duke of Norfolk, known as "the Jockey," who died in 1815.

dinner to the Prince, which he affected to consider of great importance, and so went out to answer them, while the Duke of Clarence went on drinking with the Duke of Norfolk. But on the second day this joke was carried too far, and in the evening the Duke of Norfolk showed he was affronted. The Prince took me aside and said, 'Stay after every one is gone to-night; the Jockey's got sulky, and I must give him a broiled bone to get him in a good humour again.' So, of course, I stayed, and about one o'clock the Prince of Wales and Duke of Clarence, the Duke of Norfolk and myself, sat down to a supper of broiled bones, the result of which was that, having fallen asleep myself, I was awoke by the sound of the Duke of Norfolk's snoring. I found the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence in a very animated discussion as to the particular shape and make of the wig worn by George II."[1]

The Duke of Norfolk, "Jockey of Norfolk," was a friend of Fox, and in public affairs showed a certain amount of political talent, but we look in vain for any redeeming qualities in his private character. He was heartless in his dealing with men, and worse than heartless in his relations with women. Gross in his tastes, he affected low company and low pleasures; a glutton and a drunkard, so dirty was he in his personal habits that he rarely washed himself, and still more rarely changed his linen. He complained one day to Dudley North that he suffered from rheumatism, and had tried every remedy with-

[1] "The Creevey Papers," vol. i. pp. 49-51.

out effect.[1] "Pray, my Lord Duke," said North, "did you ever try a clean shirt?" "Drunkenness," writes Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, "was in him an hereditary vice, transmitted down, probably, by his ancestors from Plantagenet times, and inherent in his formation."[2]

Whenever the Duke came to Brighton, his appearance was the signal for an orgie. On one of these occasions he quarrelled with the royal brothers over some imaginary slight (he was always quarrelsome in his cups), and ordered his carriage to drive him back to Arundel. The Prince determined that he should not go, but it was useless to argue with him in his present condition. When the coach came round the Prince escorted the Duke to the door, and privately ordered the coachman to drive for half-an-hour round the Pavilion grounds. The Duke was so drunk that he did not know whither he was going; he fell asleep in the coach and when it stopped he thought he was at the end of his journey. He was carried back into the Pavilion and put to bed. Under all the circumstances [illegible] seemed the best thing to be done. This plain statement of the incident may be compared with Thackeray's distorted version in the "Four Georges" given below.[3] One would gather [illegible]

[1] "On one side Duke Norfolk pushed [illegible]
For he never liked water [illegible]
The Times, March 1793, "On the late [illegible] Yard"

[2] Wraxall's "Memoirs of my own Time."

[3] "The Prince of Wales had [illegible] notable scheme for making the old [illegible] table was enjoined to drink wine with the [illegible] the old toper did not refuse. He soon [illegible]

Duke of Norfolk was a blameless old man, the innocent victim of a low trick on the part of the wicked Prince, instead of being what he was, one of the most hardened and disreputable old sots in existence. The scene was discreditable to every one concerned, but there was nothing in it to justify Thackeray's malevolent attack on the Prince, for we must take into account not only the Duke's character but the manners of the time, in which practical jokes and heavy drinking were common. "Men of all ages drink abominably," writes Sir Gilbert Elliot. "Fox drinks what I should call a great deal, though he is not reckoned to do so by his companions, Sheridan excessively, and Grey more than any of them. . . . Pitt, I am told, drinks as much as anybody."[1]

In October our lively chronicler Creevey was

conspiracy against him; he drank glass for glass; he overthrew many of the brave. At last the First Gentleman of Europe proposed bumpers of brandy. One of the royal brothers filled a great glass for the Duke. He stood up and tossed off the drink. 'Now,' said he, 'I will have my carriage and go home.' The Prince urged upon him his previous promise to sleep under the roof where he had been so generously entertained. 'No,' he said; 'he had had enough of such hospitality. A trap had been set for him; he would leave the place at once and never enter its doors more.'

"The carriage was called, and came; but, in the half-hour's interval, the liquor had proved too potent for the old man; his host's generous purpose was answered, and the Duke's old grey head lay stupefied on the table. Nevertheless, when his post-chaise was announced, he staggered to it as well as he could, and stumbling in, bade the postillions drive to Arundel. They drove him for half-an-hour round and round the Pavilion lawn; the poor old man fancied he was going home. When he awoke that morning, he was in bed at the Prince's hideous house at Brighton. . . . I can fancy the flushed faces of the royal Princes as they support themselves at the portico pillars, and look on at old Norfolk's disgrace; but I can't fancy how the man who perpetrated it continued to be called a gentleman."—"The Four Georges."

[1] "Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot."

called away from Brighton, but he left his wife behind him, to push his interests at the Pavilion Though a handsome and agreeable woman, Mrs Creevey does not seem to have been very successful with the Prince, but she made the running with Mrs Fitzherbert The letters which she wrote to her husband from Brighton, allowing for exaggeration, give interesting accounts of the life at the Pavilion, and throw side-lights on the relations between the Prince and Mrs Fitzherbert

Mrs Creevey writes to Mr Creevey (October 29, 1805) "Oh, this wicked Pavilion! We were there till ½ past one this morning The Prince came up and sat by me—introduced McMahon[1] to me and talked a great deal about Mrs Fitzherbert —said she had been 'delighted with my note and wished much to see me He asked her, 'When?'—and he said her answer was, 'Not till *you* are gone, and I can see her *comfortably* I suppose this might be correct, for Mac told me he had been 'worrying her to death all the morning'[2]

The heat of the Pavilion was a constant source of complaint among the Prince's guests The Prince, who disliked cold intensely, had "a sort of patent stove placed in the hall to heat the building, and it did so so effectually that his guests were nearly suffocated The room in which the Prince dined was known among them as "the royal oven' It had a domed ceiling, and every particle of air was excluded, when the fire there was lighted

[1] The Right Hon John McMahon, Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales

[2] "The Creevey Papers, vol i p 65

and the patent stove was burning in the hall, the diners were nearly baked. This gave rise to one of Sheridan's witticisms. They were dining one day in the "royal oven" when Sheridan said to Hanger: "How do you feel yourself, Hanger?" "Hot, hot as hell," gasped Hanger. "It is quite right," said Sheridan, "that all of us here should be prepared in this world for what we may be sure will be our climate in the next." Mrs. Creevey suffered from "the climate" like the rest of the company, for she writes (November 5, 1805): "My head is *very* bad, I suppose with the heat of the Pavilion last night. We were there before Mrs. Fitzherbert came, and it almost made her faint, but she put on no airs to be interesting and soon recovered, and I had a great deal of comfortable prose with her. . . . Before she came, he (the Prince) was talking of the fineness of the day, and said, 'But I was not out. I went to Mrs. Fitzherbert's at one o'clock, and stayed talking with her till past six, which was certainly very *unfashionable.*' Now, was he not at that moment thinking of her as his lawful wife? for in no other sense could he call it *unfashionable.*"[1]

Mrs. Creevey apparently quite lost her heart to Mrs. Fitzherbert, whom she now calls "her mistress." She writes to her husband: "*Friday Night, 12 o'clock.* . . . I think you will like to hear I have spent a very comfortable evening with my mistress. We had a long discourse about Lady Wellesley. The folly of men marrying such women led us to Mrs. Fox, and I think she would have liked to go further than I dared or than our neighbours would

[1] "The Creevey Papers," vol. i. pp. 67, 68.

permit."[1] Mrs. Creevey either was deceived by the graciousness of Mrs. Fitzherbert's manner (she was always gracious to every one) or, having failed with the Prince, she was at pains to impress on her husband that she had secured a friend at court in Mrs. Fitzherbert. She writes: *Past* 4 *o'clock, Monday:* "Mrs. Fitzherbert came before 12, and has literally only this moment left me. We have been all the time alone, and she has been confidential to a degree that almost frightens me, and that I can hardly think sufficiently accounted for by her professing in the strongest terms to have liked me more and more every time she has seen me. . . . So much in excuse for her telling me the history of her life, and dwelling more particularly on the explanation of all her feelings and conduct towards the Prince. If she is as *true* as I think she is *wise*, she is an extraordinary person, and most worthy to be beloved."

Now, with due reference to Mrs. Creevey (a very superior person to her husband), all we know of Mrs. Fitzherbert goes to show that she was the last woman in the world to give herself away in this manner to a comparative stranger. She was, by long training, cautious in her conduct, and guarded in her conversation; especially on *The Subject*, as she called her relations with the Prince, her lips were always sealed, even to those who knew her best. She is very unlikely, therefore, to have unsealed them to Mrs. Creevey. Nor was she a woman to form sudden friendships, especially with the Creeveys, whose measure she must have taken

[1] "The Creevey Papers," vol. i. p. 70.

at once, for people of their type were all too common at the Prince's court. She had a habit of looking blank, and smiling when questioned, and of affecting ignorance which led many people—Creevey among them—into the mistake of thinking her amiably stupid. Mrs. Creevey sends her husband a letter which was written to her by Mrs. Fitzherbert announcing the death of Nelson.[1] This letter was written at the time Mrs. Fitzherbert was supposed to be pouring forth these indiscreet confidences to her, yet it is couched in terms of formal civility, not at all the sort of epistle one would write to a cherished confidante and friend.

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Mrs. Creevey.

"*November* 6, 1805.

"D^R^ MADAM,—The Prince has this moment rec^d^. an account from the Admiralty of the death of poor Lord Nelson, which has affected him most extremely. I think you may wish to know the news, which, upon any other occasion might be called a glorious victory—twenty out of three and thirty of the enemy's fleet being entirely destroyed—no English ship being taken or sunk—Capts. Duff and Cook both kill'd, and the French Adl. Villeneuve taken prisoner. Poor Lord Nelson rec^d^. his death by a shot of a musket from an enemy's ship upon his shoulder, and expir'd two hours after, but not till the ship struck and afterwards sunk, which he had the consolation of hearing, as well as his compleat victory, before he died. Excuse this hurried

[1] The Battle of Trafalgar was fought, and Nelson died, on October 21, 1805.



THE PAVILION, BRIGHTON, *circa* 1818

scrawl! I am so nervous I scarce can hold my pen God bless you Yours,

"M FITZHERBERT"[1]

The news of Nelson's death greatly affected the Prince, he did not appear in public the day it was known, but spent the whole day alone with Mrs Fitzherbert Mrs Creevey had something to say on this subject She saw Mrs Fitzherbert a few days later, and writes (November 8, 1805) "The first of my visits this morning was to my Mistress I found her alone, and she was excellent—gave me an account of the Prince's grief about Lord N, and then entered into the domestic failings of the latter, in a way infinitely creditable to her, and skilful too She was all for Lady Nelson, and against Lady Hamilton who, she said (hero though he was), overpower'd him, and took possession of him quite by force But she ended in a good way, by saying, 'Poor creature! I am sorry for her now, for I suppose she is in grief'"[2]

With Nelson's last dying request concerning Lady Hamilton the Prince heartily sympathised He (the Prince) wrote to a friend[3] "You may be well assured that, did it depend on me, there would not be a wish, a desire of our ever-to-be-lamented and much-loved friend, as well as adored hero, that I would not consider as a solemn obligation upon his friends and his country to fulfil, it is a duty they owe to his memory, and his matchless and unrivalled excellence. Such are my sentiments,

[1] "The Creevey Papers," vol. i. pp. 69, 70
[2] Ibid., vol. i pp. 70, 71
[3] Letter of the Prince of Wales to Mr Alexander Davison

and I hope that there is still in this country sufficient honour, virtue, and gratitude to prompt us to ratify and to carry into effect the last dying request of our Nelson—by that means proving, not only to the whole world, but to future ages, that we were worthy of having such a man belonging to us."

Unfortunately it did not depend upon the Prince, and the disregard of Nelson's dying wish by those in authority, and the hard fate of Lady Hamilton, are matters of history. The Prince had neither power nor influence either at court or with the Government. His advocacy did more harm than good, and for him to champion a cause was sufficient for it to be negatived. Never was heir-apparent in a position more galling. But the Prince did all he could to show his respect for the dead hero's memory; he stopped all festivities at the Pavilion for ten days, and then, lest he should be thought unpatriotic (for whatever he did was wrong in the estimation of the King's court), he celebrated the victory of Trafalgar in great style. A superb illumination of the town of Brighton took place on November 14, and on the following day the Prince of Wales threw the Pavilion open for an "Inhabitants' ball." Everything was done magnificently. The Prince, we are told, attended by a large company of "fashionables," appeared in the ballroom "with all that amiable condescension for which he is so eminently and deservedly distinguished, but retired before supper, as did Mrs. Fitzherbert and her party, composed of about a dozen ladies of the first rank and fashion."

CHAPTER IV

THE SEYMOUR CASE[1]

(1803-1806)

DURING the years 1803-1806 Mrs Fitzherbert found herself involved in a protracted lawsuit concerning the custody of a little girl, Mary Seymour, who had been placed under her care, and whom she regarded as her ward and adopted daughter

Mary Seymour, for a time the object of much litigation, was the youngest orphan child of Lord Hugh and Lady Horatia Seymour[2] Lord Hugh Seymour was the fifth son of the first Marquess of Hertford He married in 1786 the lovely Lady

[1] The facts related in this chapter concerning the Seymour case are based (*a*) upon a memorandum written by Admiral Sir George Seymour, G C B (Mrs Dawson Damer's eldest brother), and (*b*) on a Parliamentary paper, printed for the House of Lords This paper contains all the letters and affidavits *made on both sides* before the Court of Chancery, and was issued for the information of the Peers when the case came before the House of Lords in 1806

[2] Admiral *Lord Hugh Seymour*, fifth son of the first Marquess of Hertford, m 1786 *Lady Anne Horatia*, third daughter of the second Earl Waldegrave They both died in 1801, leaving issue five sons and two daughters viz —

George Francis (*Sir*) *Seymour*, Admiral of the Fleet, G C B, d 1870, *Hugh Henry*, Lt Col, d 1821, *Horace Beauchamp* (*Sir*), K.C B., Col., M P., d. 1851, *William John Richard*, b 1793, d 1801, *Frederick Charles William*, b 1797, d 1856, *Horatia*, m 1814 John Philip Morier, d 1853, *Mary Georgiana Emma*, b 1798, m 1825 Rt Hon G L. Dawson Damer, d 1848

Horatia, third daughter of the second Earl Waldegrave, whose mother had married secondly the Duke of Gloucester. The Prince of Wales in 1786 had appointed Lord Hugh (then a captain in the navy) his Master of the Robes and Keeper of the Privy Purse. Lord Hugh married Lady Horatia soon after this appointment, and through his relations with the Prince he came to know of his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert. At this period Lord Hugh and Lady Horatia lived much in the Prince of Wales's set. Both held Mrs. Fitzherbert in high esteem, and between Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lady Horatia a warm friendship existed. In 1790 Lord Hugh was given a higher appointment in the navy, and his duties took him to sea. For a time, therefore, neither he nor his wife saw much of the Prince of Wales or Mrs. Fitzherbert. In 1794 came the Prince's separation from Mrs. Fitzherbert, and in 1795 his marriage to Princess Caroline of Brunswick. Knowing that the Prince was already married to Mrs. Fitzherbert by a ceremony which, though not binding in law, was binding in honour, Lord Hugh strongly disapproved of the Prince's subsequent marriage to the Princess Caroline, and of all the circumstances connected with Lady Jersey. He felt that he could no longer continue even an honorary member of the Prince of Wales's household, and resigned his offices. This brought about an estrangement between the Prince and Lord Hugh, which lasted until the latter's death in 1801. But the friendship which he and Lady Horatia felt for Mrs. Fitzherbert continued unabated.

Lady Horatia Seymour, who was the most beauti-

ful of the three beautiful Waldegrave sisters, bore her husband a numerous family, five sons and two daughters. On November 23, 1798, her last and youngest child, Mary, was born at Brompton. Lady Horatia was then in a very delicate state of health—she had inherited the seeds of consumption, which were rapidly developing. The doctors declared that the only chance of saving her life was for her to go at once to Madeira, before the winter was further advanced. Unfortunately this involved separation from her infant, for the child was extremely delicate, and the doctors would not suffer her to be exposed to the risks of a sea voyage. Lady Horatia was greatly embarrassed and distressed, and in her dilemma she wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert, who was then at Bath, and told her of her trouble. Mrs. Fitzherbert, on the strength of her long friendship, immediately wrote to Lady Horatia offering to go and see her, and to take charge of *any* of her children if it would make things easier for her. Lady Horatia replied to her from Brompton as follows:—

"DEAR MRS. FITZHERBERT,—The letter I received from you on Monday was just like yourself, everything that is kind, good, friendly, and comfortable to one's feelings. It appears to me quite certain that I shall leave this place on Monday, and shall be at Portsmouth on Tuesday, so pray meet us there as soon as you can after Tuesday. I do not foresee anything that will prevent us from leaving home that day, but if there should be I will let you know; at all events I will write a letter on Monday before

I set out. Having got leave to take Frederick,[1] I cannot bring myself to give him up again. I know exactly what you feel about taking care of one of them, and nothing would be a greater relief to my mind than leaving little Mary with you; but I know very well that the instant her little finger ached you would be frightened and make yourself ill, therefore as I cannot ensure her perfect health I think she had better be at Hambledon with Phillips, who will have no alarms. But we will talk all this over at Portsmouth; I cannot express how sincerely we feel your kindness."

Mrs. Fitzherbert therefore went to see Lady Horatia at Portsmouth the first week in December 1798, travelling thither from Bath. She found Lady Horatia with Lord Hugh Seymour and her sister the Countess of Euston. At Portsmouth Mrs. Fitzherbert repeated her offer, and it was then settled that the infant, Mary Seymour, should be committed to her care. The child was left at Brompton with the nurse, and it was agreed by the parents that she should be delivered into Mrs. Fitzherbert's hands as soon as she returned to London. Mrs. Fitzherbert testified on affidavit that this arrangement "appeared to afford infinite relief and comfort to the mind of Lady Horatia, and to give great satisfaction not only to Lord Hugh Seymour but to Lady Euston." She also declared that she was induced to take charge of the child "solely by her affection and friendship for Lady Horatia." The matter being thus arranged,

[1] Frederick was Lady Horatia's youngest boy, then little more than a year old.

Mrs. Fitzherbert left Portsmouth and returned to Bath to finish her "cure" there.

Lady Horatia wrote Mrs. Fitzherbert the following letter the day after she left Portsmouth:—

"My dear Mrs. Fitz.,—I was quite glad you were off somehow or other yesterday without my taking leave of you, as I felt as nervous as possible as long as I knew you were in the house, wishing, yet dreading, to see you. The ships are just come round, and Sir J. Laforey[1] sends me word that we are to sail to-morrow, so I hope the wind will continue fair. *I have written to Lady George Seymour[2] to tell her that little Mary is to be your child.* There never was anything so kind and good as yourself, but it is impossible for me to express everything that I feel about you."

The next day Lady Horatia sailed for Madeira. Mrs. Fitzherbert caught a severe chill on her journey from Portsmouth, and in consequence she was detained at Bath for six weeks longer than she had intended to stay. She was therefore not able at once to claim the infant Mary Seymour, who was meantime taken first to the house of her maternal aunt, Lady Euston, and then removed to the house of Lord George Seymour, her paternal uncle. Mrs. Fitzherbert returned to London in February 1799, and a few days later she received a message from Lord George Seymour, asking her to send for his niece, Mary Seymour, at once, as measles had

[1] Admiral Sir John Laforey, Bart. (1729–1796)
[2] Lady Horatia's sister-in-law.

broken out in his family. Mrs. Fitzherbert took away the little girl immediately, and brought her to her house in Tilney Street. From that day she became to her as though she were her own child.

Later in the year (*1799*), *Lord Hugh Seymour*, the child's father, returned from Madeira, where he had left Lady Horatia, whose health was still precarious. During his stay in London he was daily at Mrs. Fitzherbert's house to see little Mary, or "Minney" as she was called, and he often expressed to Mrs. Fitzherbert his gratitude at the tender care she took of the child. Lady Horatia wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert to the same effect. Lord Hugh was only in England two months; he then sailed for Jamaica, calling at Madeira to take up Lady Horatia on his way thither. He never came back again to England. Lady Horatia remained with her husband in Jamaica for nearly two years, but the climate could not cure but only arrest the fatal progress of her disease.

Early in June 1801 Lady Horatia returned to London and took a house in Charlotte Street, Portland Place, in order that she might have her children with her. The hand of death was already upon her. She was only in London about a month, and then she went to Bristol, where she died, on July 12, 1801. Lord Hugh died in Jamaica on September 11 following, without having received the news of his wife's death. He left seven children, the youngest of whom, Mary, then three years of age, was still living under the care of Mrs. Fitzherbert.

Lord Hugh Seymour's will came to hand some

months later. In it he appointed the Earl of Euston and Lord Henry Seymour as his executors and as the guardians of his children, whom he mentioned by name. Mary was not mentioned, as the will had been made before she was born. The executors, however, thought that their guardianship extended to her as well, and as they (Lord Henry Seymour in particular) did not wish that the child should remain permanently with Mrs. Fitzherbert, they wrote to tell her that Lady Waldegrave, the child's aunt, was willing to undertake the care of the little girl, as soon as it was convenient to Mrs. Fitzherbert to give her up. Mrs. Fitzherbert was greatly distressed at this notification, and said that she had become so much attached to "Minney" that she should part from her with very great regret; she prayed that the removal of the child should be postponed until she was a little older. The executors, mindful of Mrs. Fitzherbert's kindness and generosity in the past, and also of the fact that the little girl was in a very delicate state of health, agreed to her request, and said that they would allow the child to remain another year, until June 1803. Before that time came, the Prince of Wales, in February 1803, sent a message to the executors, saying that he, as well as Mrs. Fitzherbert, had become so much attached to "Minney," and saw how much the child would suffer from being taken away from one who loved her as a mother, that he would settle £10,000 upon her, if they would consent to her remaining with Mrs. Fitzherbert. But the executors, Lord Henry Seymour especially, were inflexible. Lord Henry declined the Prince's

offer, saying that his niece Mary would have sufficient fortune of her own (the equal share of her father's property which she had inherited), and he pointed out that Mrs. Fitzherbert was no kin to the child, who had many relatives in blood who were able and willing to take charge of her.[1] He had therefore made arrangements for her to be placed under the care of her aunt, Lady Waldegrave.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was overwhelmed with grief at the thought of losing the child; moreover, Lady Waldegrave was anything but a friend of Mrs. Fitzherbert's, and the separation would therefore be complete. The Prince, too, felt the loss keenly, and he vowed that he would not have the child torn from her home. He was always at Mrs. Fitzherbert's house in those days, and had become devoted to little Mary Seymour. The opposition of the executors, and the tears of Mrs. Fitzherbert, determined him to have things arranged as he wished. He consulted the ex-Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, who advised him to employ a young and rising lawyer named Romilly,[2] who counselled Mrs. Fitzherbert to refuse to yield up the child. Romilly argued that

[1] The nearest of kin of Miss Mary Seymour other than her brothers and sisters (who were infants) were: H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester, her maternal grandmother; the Marquess of Hertford, Lord Henry Seymour, Lord Robert Seymour, Lord William Seymour, Lord George Seymour, her paternal uncles; the Countess of Lincoln, Lady Elizabeth Seymour, Lady Isabella Horton, her paternal aunts; the Countess Waldegrave and the Duchess of Euston, her maternal aunts; H.H. Prince William Frederick of Gloucester, her maternal uncle of the half-blood, and H.H. Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester, her maternal aunt of the half-blood.

[2] Afterwards Sir Samuel Romilly (1757–1818), K.C., M.P., Solicitor-General.



LADY HORATIA SEYMOUR

(*After a Miniature by* RICHARD COSWAY R.A. *by permission of* [illegible])

the right to the custody of the infant Mary Seymour assumed by the executors of her father's will was unfounded, as they were only appointed co-guardians with Lady Horatia in the event of her second marriage. Moreover, the will was made before Mary was born. The result was that, in July 1803, Mr. Bentinck, an intimate friend of Lord Hugh Seymour, who was named as "next friend of the Appellant," caused a Bill to be filed in the Court of Chancery against Lord Euston and Lord Henry Seymour, who claimed the guardianship of *all* the children of the late Lord Hugh Seymour, including Mary.

The case was argued at length. It is worthy of note that no objection was raised to Mrs. Fitzherbert on the ground of her peculiar position with the Prince of Wales, which (unless she was his wife) might surely have disqualified her from acting as the guardian of a female child of high birth connections. On the contrary, the Attorney General, who appeared for Lord Euston and Lord Henry Seymour, began his speech by saying that "Mrs. Fitzherbert merited everything that could be said in her praise; but whatever amiable qualities she might possess, the religion she professed excluded her from the right to retain the custody of a Protestant child." Mr. Romilly, for Mrs. Fitzherbert, insisted "that there could be no danger to the religion of the child from the influence of Mrs. Fitzherbert," and added that "the child's residence with Mrs. Fitzherbert would not only be the means of her fortune accumulating by the time of her coming of age, but that she would derive peculiar

advantage from the patronage and the protection of the Prince of Wales!"

A statement of facts was presented, Mrs. Fitzherbert being described as "Maria Fitzherbert, Widow," and many affidavits were sworn to. From them we quote the following:[1]—

Mrs. Fitzherbert in her affidavit (in addition to the facts connected with the handing over of the child to her care already related) testified:

"That upon Lady Horatia's return to England in 1801 Mrs. Fitzherbert, uncertain whether she might not think herself well enough, and chuse to resume the child, went to converse with her on that subject, but Lady Horatia (perceiving her emotion at the idea of parting with the child, for which Mrs. Fitzherbert had then contracted a maternal affection) answered, shedding tears, 'Don't think I could be so unfeeling as to take her from you,' and on Mrs. Fitzherbert asking her what she was to do with it, she answered, 'Pray, keep it, and do with it as you please, and as you have done; as I consider it is more your child than my own:' or used words to that effect:

"That the Appellant[2] was daily afterwards, during Lady Horatia's stay in town, sent to visit her, but she particularly desired that Mrs. Fitzherbert

[1] These affidavits were afterwards printed in a Parliamentary Paper which is thus entitled:—

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Between

MARY GEORGIANA EMMA SEYMOUR, an Infant, by WILLIAM BENTINCK, Esquire, her next friend, *Appellant.*

The Right Honourable GEORGE FITZROY, commonly called the Earl of Euston, and the Honourable HENRY SEYMOUR, commonly called Lord HENRY SEYMOUR, *Respondents.*

[2] The infant, Mary Seymour, herein called the Appellant.

should continue to have the uncontrolled management of her, and send her only when and as she should think proper: . . .

"That Mrs. Fitzherbert having, when Lady Horatia finally resigned the Appellant to her care in the manner before stated, given her to understand that she would accept and thenceforth consider the Appellant as her adopted child; she had ever since felt herself to be under an obligation of the most solemn nature to discharge towards the Appellant, to the utmost of her power, all the duties of a mother; to which she was no less impelled by the maternal affection she bore towards the Appellant; and she was therefore earnestly desirous to be permitted to continue the care and charge of the Appellant; and in case the Court should think proper to appoint her Guardian, she intended and was willing to undertake to continue to maintain and educate her in a manner suitable to her future fortune and expectations, at her own expense, in order that the whole income of the Appellant's fortune might accumulate for her benefit:

"That the Appellant is a child of uncommonly early discernment and of great facility in learning, and Mrs. Fitzherbert, being desirous of giving her every advantage in education, and that she should be bred up in the principles of the Church of England, did in the early part of the then last winter, apply to the Bishop of Winchester to take on him the superintendence of her religious education, and to recommend to her a clergyman of the Church of England to proceed in instructing her in reading (in which she was very forward) and to

commence and take the conduct of her education in the principles of religion:

"That the Bishop complied with her request, and recommended the Rev. Mr. Crofts, preacher at Portland Chapel, as a proper tutor for the Appellant, by whom she had been attended and instructed accordingly, and she had been occasionally examined by the Bishop, who was well satisfied with her progress:

"That although Mrs. Fitzherbert was bred in the Roman Catholic faith, she always entertained and expressed the opinion that a child ought to be educated in the religion professed by its parents; and that certainly the daughter of a great family, such as the Appellant, ought to be educated in the Established religion of her country:

"That Mrs. Fitzherbert had in fact educated a child of inferior condition, born in her own house, in that religion, thinking it more advantageous for her; for though Mrs. Fitzherbert professed the tenets of the Catholic religion in which she was educated, she did not consider it her duty either to make converts or to educate the children of Protestants in the Catholic religion; and she felt that to attempt to educate the Appellant in a religion different from that of her parents, would be a gross breach of the confidence reposed in her, and of that duty she had undertaken to discharge:

"That the Appellant was of a delicate constitution and of a very tender and affectionate disposition, and having known no other mother than Mrs. Fitzherbert, she was bound to her by as strong ties of affection as she could possibly have been to her

natural mother; and the separation of her from Mrs. Fitzherbert would deeply affect her mind and not improbably impair her health, whilst to Mrs. Fitzherbert, by depriving her of an object of her most tender affection, and of the means of discharging her engagement to her dying friend, it would prove the source of unspeakable and lasting affliction."

The Prince of Wales also made an affidavit, sworn November 24, 1804. He stated, "That a great intimacy and friendship subsisted between his Royal Highness and Lord Hugh Seymour and Lady Horatia:

"That the Appellant having been entrusted by Lord Hugh and Lady Horatia, during the absence of Lady Horatia from England, between the latter end of the year 1798 and the Spring of 1801, on account of her health, to the care of Mrs. Fitzherbert, his Royal Highness frequently saw and by degrees became much attached to the Appellant, as well on her own account as on that of her parents:

"That about the month of June 1801, Lady Horatia having some little time before returned to England in a very declining state of health, his Royal Highness received a message from her requesting him to call upon her at a house in which she then resided, situated in Charlotte Street, Portland Place, the ensuing morning, which his Royal Highness accordingly did, but was not admitted, her servant informing him that she was laid down and asleep: That the same evening his Royal Highness received a note from her Ladyship, strongly expressive of her disappointment that he did not

come in, and desiring him earnestly to call again the next day, and to take no refusal of admittance:

"That his Royal Highness accordingly called upon Lady Horatia the following morning, when he found her in an extremely debilitated state of health; that she appeared for some time overcome with the strong emotions of mind and body which she felt upon his Royal Highness's first appearance, but at length, having attained a degree of composure, she began a conversation with him to the following effect: She first stated how little time she had apparently to live, which her own inward feelings sufficiently warned her of; and when his Royal Highness tried to divert her ideas from such melancholy prospects, she desired him to be silent and not to interrupt her, as she had much to say to him, and could not be answerable how long her powers would enable her to converse at all; and most particularly therefore was she thus anxious, as the purport of what she had to say to his Royal Highness was the request of a dying mother in behalf of her child.

"Lady Horatia then commenced by talking much of Lord Hugh Seymour, and expressed both her own and his Lordship's extreme satisfaction at the renewal of that friendship and good understanding between his Lordship and his Royal Highness, which had existed for so many years (but which for a short period had met with some slight interruption). She then called the Appellant to her, who had been sitting upon the knee of his Royal Highness for some time during the foregoing part of the conversation. She remarked what a lovely

sweet babe the Appellant was; how fond the child appeared to be of his Royal Highness, and how extremely his Royal Highness appeared to be attached to the Appellant; she thanked him in very warm expressions of gratitude for the affection he had shown her, and observed how fortunate she had been in meeting with such a friend as Mrs. Fitzherbert had been to her under all circumstances, with whom to leave the child, and not only expressed her strong approbation of the condition she found the child in, but her complete satisfaction at her happy situation under Mrs. Fitzherbert's care.

"She then adverted to a conversation she had had with Mrs. Fitzherbert in consequence of her offer to deliver up the child, and said she doubted not she had told his Royal Highness what had passed; and added she hoped her mind was made easy on that head; she said it wounded her to the heart to think what Mrs. Fitzherbert must have suffered whilst making up her mind to deliver up the Appellant; spoke of the handsome manner in which she had proposed it, and said,' *She would not be so unfeeling as to take it from her*,' adding, '*The child knows no other mother than her*, and that she *had directed her to do with it as her own*.' She observed that Mrs. Fitzherbert must be more attached to the Appellant than she could be, having hardly ever seen her, and Mrs. Fitzherbert had had her almost constantly with her from her birth; remarking at the same time that she could hardly have believed, from the state of health she was in at the time of her lying-in, that she

could have borne so fine an infant, or expressed herself to that effect; and Lady Horatia then blessed both Mrs. Fitzherbert and his Royal Highness for the extreme affection and care they had each of them shown towards the Appellant; 'but,' added she, 'I have something more, Prince of Wales, to say to you; recollect that it is the last request of a dying mother, and that is that you will take an oath and swear to me most solemnly that you will be the father and protector, through life, of this dear child.' Whereupon his Royal Highness accordingly, without the smallest hesitation, gave his most solemn engagement to her to fulfil to his utmost her request, and Lady Horatia then said that she should 'die content, and that God would reward his Royal Highness for it.' She then appeared to be perfectly relieved, called down the other children, and a short time after the Countess of Euston was announced, when a general conversation commenced, and his Royal Highness shortly after took his leave, and never saw Lady Horatia afterwards."

An affidavit was also sworn to by the Bishop of Winchester, as follows:—

"That in the early part of the then last winter, the Deponent was applied to by letter from Mrs. Fitzherbert stating the circumstances of the Appellant then under her care, expressing her wish that the Appellant should be educated in the principles of the Church of England, and requesting that the Deponent would recommend some clergyman of the Church of England who could attend and instruct her in the principles of that Church.

"That his Lordship accordingly applied to the Rev. Mr. Crofts, preacher at Portland Chapel, who willingly undertook that office; and that His Lordship had several times heard from and conversed with Mr. Crofts upon the subject, who assured his Lordship that his employment was attended with great satisfaction and success; that the Appellant had made great progress in the Catechism of the Church of England, had read several books of instruction in the principles of that Church, and promised (as far as a child of her age could promise) to be a firm and steady member of it. That his Lordship had since occasionally seen the Appellant and had heard her read, and conversed with her, and from his own observation was persuaded that the account he received from Mr. Crofts was just and true."

In addition to the Bishop's testimony, there was an affidavit to the same effect from the clergyman appointed to instruct Miss Seymour in the doctrines of the Church of England. There were also affidavits from Sir Walter Farquhar and other eminent physicians to the effect that it would seriously injure the child's health to separate her from Mrs. Fitzherbert; "that she was a child of delicate constitution and great sensibility of mind," and "the warm and parental attentions shown to her by Mrs. Fitzherbert were always returned with a love and affection bordering on adoration." The shock of separation would therefore be so great that the doctors declined to answer for the consequences.

General William Keppel, Governor of Martinique, who saw a great deal of Lord Hugh and Lady

Horatia Seymour when they were in the West Indies, also swore that Lady Horatia spoke of Mrs. Fitzherbert frequently with great affection, and said how glad she was that she had charge of her daughter Mary.

This, with some other evidence, chiefly unimportant, was Mrs. Fitzherbert's case. On the other hand, the executors, Lord Henry Seymour and the Earl of Euston, based their claim for the guardianship of the child on several counts, which may be summarised as follows :—

(1.) Because their propinquity of blood gave them a decided preference over Mrs. Fitzherbert.

(2.) Because the child's father, by implication, wished it; that is, he appointed them guardians of his other children.

(3.) Because Mrs. Fitzherbert was a complete stranger in blood, despite the friendship and affection which existed between her and the child's parents.

(4.) Because the conversation between the Prince of Wales and Lady Horatia, when it was alleged she confided her child to the Prince's guardianship, had been misunderstood by his Royal Highness.

(5.) Because of the religion of Mrs. Fitzherbert. This the executors declared constituted a positive and *unsurmountable objection* to her. The affidavit of the Bishop of Winchester by no means removed or diminished their objections.

The Countess of Euston made an affidavit which conflicted with that sworn to by the Prince of

Wales [illegible]
Lady Euston [illegible]
"Then she was [illegible]
the Prince of Wales [illegible]
in Charlotte Street [illegible]
a few minutes [illegible]
evening when the [illegible]
told the [illegible]
morning, the [illegible]
and all her [illegible]
[illegible]
she knew that [illegible]
sincerely [illegible]
friendship [illegible]
and the Princess [illegible]
other [illegible]
that Lady [illegible]
Hugh [illegible]
his [illegible]
Prince's [illegible]
Horatia [illegible]
having [illegible]
Commons?'

Lady Euston [illegible]
once to [illegible]
Mrs. Fitzherbert [illegible]
calls at [illegible]
there [illegible]
with Mrs. Fitzherbert [illegible]
Lady Euston [illegible]
present at the [illegible]
immediately [illegible]
found Lady [illegible]

seeming to regret that she had promised Mrs. Fitzherbert the care of her little girl during her absence. She said that she would much prefer her being with Lord and Lady George Seymour, but that happened to be inconvenient at the moment, as they were just then changing houses. Lady Euston said that the child could go to Lord and Lady George Seymour after all, as they would soon be settled. Lady Horatia after a pause replied, 'If I now change my mind, Mrs. Fitzherbert will think me unkind and capricious, and it does not much signify, for you know I shall be back in the Spring, and she can only have the child for a very short time.' When Lady Horatia returned to England in June 1801 she intended to have Mary with her, but her health was very bad, and the house in Charlotte Street was so small that she consented to her staying with Mrs. Fitzherbert a little longer, more especially as Mrs. Fitzherbert prayed hard to keep the little one, and grieved greatly at the thought of parting from her. Lady Horatia consented, saying she would not be so unfeeling as to take her away suddenly after all she had done for her, but to Lady Euston Lady Horatia said, 'I shall never cease pitying Mrs. Fitzherbert. She has just told me that she had heard I was coming to England to lye in, and that she had rejoiced at it, thinking that if I had another little girl, I might then have allowed her to keep little Minney. As there was no truth in the report, it was not worth arguing about it, but I think poor Mrs. Fitzherbert must feel that if I had fifty daughters I could part with none of them to her.'"

The Countess Waldegrave, Lady Horatia's other sister, also made an affidavit to much the same effect as Lady Euston, saying that the arrangement of leaving the child in Mrs. Fitzherbert's care was only a temporary one.

The case occupied many months. At last, in February 1805, the Master in Chancery, having considered all the circumstances of the case, reported in favour of Lord Euston and Lord Henry Seymour, and approved of them as guardians of the child. Mrs. Fitzherbert was determined not to be beaten, and, supported by the Prince of Wales, she carried the case to a higher court. It was argued there, but with no better result, for in April 1805 the Lord Chancellor (Eldon) confirmed the report of the Master in Chancery.

Matters now began to look serious, and Mrs. Fitzherbert was in despair at the prospect of losing the child. Erskine, who had been employed with Romilly as Mrs. Fitzherbert's counsel in the case in Chancery, advised an appeal to the House of Lords as a last resort. The appeal was duly lodged in 1805, but had to stand over until the next session of Parliament. Shortly after this there was a change in the Government, and Erskine, Mrs. Fitzherbert's friend, became Lord Chancellor in the place of Lord Eldon, who had decided against her. Meanwhile Mrs. Fitzherbert, anxious to leave no stone unturned, had, through the Marchioness of Hertford, with whom she was on terms of friendship, enlisted the sympathies of the Marquis of Hertford. Lord Hertford, as the child's [illegible] paternal uncle and head of the great house of

Seymour, was a most valuable ally, and he and Lady Hertford joined with Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince of Wales to prevent little Mary Seymour falling into other hands than those of Mrs. Fitzherbert. The Prince threw himself *con amore* into the fray; he negotiated with the Hertfords, he intrigued with his friends, and before the case came before the House of Lords, he canvassed all the peers for their votes—an unheard-of proceeding, as they were sitting on appeal as judges. However, the Prince's activity met with success, for the whole of the peers promised him their votes, except the Duke of Gloucester, half-brother of Lady Horatia Seymour, Lord Eldon, ex-Lord Chancellor, and eleven others.

The case created great excitement in all classes of society; the rank and peculiar position of the parties contributing to the general interest. When the day came for the case to be argued in the House of Lords, the peers mustered in force; a great number of peeresses were also present, and the galleries were crowded. But those who had come in quest of sensation were disappointed. At the beginning of the proceedings, Lord Hertford intervened, saying it was painful to him, as the head of his house, to have a family matter like this debated by strangers, and if their Lordships would decide that he should be made the guardian of his niece (together with Lady Hertford), he was willing to undertake the charge, on the express understanding that he should be unfettered in its exercise. This was agreed to unanimously; there was no division, for the majority of the peers were obvi-

ously on Lord Hertford's side. Lord Chancellor Erskine, therefore, reversed the decree of his predecessor, and the child was handed over to the guardianship of Lord and Lady Hertford. Lord Hertford at once requested Mrs. Fitzherbert to act as his deputy, and to continue to show herself, as she had done since his brother's death, a mother to his niece. The rest of Lord Hertford's family, whatever might be their private opinion, could only bow to his decision. Thus ended the great Seymour case, which had occupied from first to last more than three years.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was overjoyed at being assured in the guardianship of her beloved child, and declared that nothing now was wanting to her happiness. All her friends congratulated her, among them being the Duke of Kent, who wrote to her as follows:—

H.R.H. the Duke of Kent to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"KENSINGTON PALACE,
"*Monday, June* [illegible]

"MY DEAREST MRS. FITZHERBERT,—It was fully my intention to have called in Tilney Street yesterday, to have expressed to you all the satisfaction I felt, at the issue of Saturday evening, but was prevented by several people [illegible] in on me unexpectedly whom I was obliged to see. I feel anxious not to delay [illegible] sentiments to you any longer, and [illegible] this mode of so doing lest I should [illegible] see you as soon as I could wish [illegible] the assurance of my best wishes [illegible]

as on every occasion in which your happiness is concerned, and believe me it is no small gratification to me to reflect that I have had the opportunity of proving, by my conduct, that in saying this, I am far from meaning empty professions.[1] Pray give my love to your *little Angel;* and allow me to subscribe myself with the truest friendship, and warmest regard, my dear Mrs. Fitzherbert, ever yours most faithfully and sincerely,

"EDWARD."

Mrs. Fitzherbert's own feelings are expressed in the following letter which she wrote to Mrs. Browne,[2] a daughter of Lord Thurlow, three days after Lord Hertford's action. Lord Thurlow had from the first interested himself in the case, and had unofficially advised the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert.

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Mrs Browne.

"TILNEY STREET,
"*Tuesday, June* 17, 1806.

"MY DEAR MRS. BROWNE,—Words cannot do justice to the happiness I enjoy at the thought of having my darling child secured to me, after the long series of misery and anxiety I have endured. The good news of my having gained my case, so completely overset me that I have scarce been myself ever since. Thank your dear Father from me a million of times, and tell him I shall not feel my happiness complete till I and my Child

[1] The Duke of Kent had promised his vote and influence in the House of Lords to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

[2] Caroline, natural daughter of Edward Lord Thurlow, married General Browne, an Equerry of the Duke of York.

in person make your acknowledgments, and bless him for all the interest he has taken, and thank him for all the trouble we have given him. I am going on Sunday out of town for a week to recruit a little, for both my health and spirits have suffered grievously during this persecution. I must tell you that Lady Waldegrave came to town on purpose, wrote to all the press to support her, turned out the people she had let her house to in Berkeley Square and fixed herself in it, telling everybody my poor Child was to go to reside with her on Saturday evening. What a horrid creature she is! Thank God she has been disappointed. Pray say everything most kind to Mrs. Harvey and excuse this hurried scrawl, as I have a hundred notes and letters to write. God bless you. If I can get to you before Sunday, I will; but you know I am not always my own mistress. Adieu, dear Mrs. Browne, and believe me always, very truly and affectionately yours,

"M. Fitzherbert."

as on every occasion in which your happiness is concerned, and believe me it is no small gratification to me to reflect that I have had the opportunity of proving, by my conduct, that in saying this, I am far from meaning empty professions.[1] Pray give my love to your *little Angel;* and allow me to subscribe myself with the truest friendship, and warmest regard, my dear Mrs. Fitzherbert, ever yours most faithfully and sincerely,

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"M. FITZHERBERT."

CHAPTER V

"THE DELICATE INVESTIGATION"

(1806–1808)

SOON after the Seymour case was settled, Mrs. Fitzherbert went down to Brighton for the rest of the summer, and took her adopted daughter with her. Lady Jerningham, who was at Brighton, writes (August 10, 1806): "On Sunday last, after I had closed my letter to you, arrived (on foot) Mrs. Fitzherbert and little Miss Seymour, a pretty child of not quite eight years old, and a little taller than Agnes. Mrs. Fitzherbert was very pleasing and conversible, said she imputed her late ill-health to the uneasiness she had undergone over this little girl, that she was particularly fond of children, and should have liked to have had a dozen of her own."

Lady Jerningham then gives an account of the Prince's hospitality at the Pavilion, which may fairly be contrasted with Mr. and Mrs. Creevey's highly-coloured descriptions of the Pavilion entertainments the previous year. Lady Jerningham was an unprejudiced witness, and she finds there nothing but politeness and decorum. She continues her letter :—

"About 8 o'clock I had a note from her [Mrs. Fitzherbert] saying she was ordered by the Prince to desire we would go that evening to the Pavilion, so we put ourselves immediately in proper attire and

went at 10 o'clock, the usual hour. The Prince, having dined at Lord Berkeley's with all his set, we found him alone returned, with a Major Bloomfield[1] who is always in attendance upon him. When the door of the Long Chinese room opened, and I saw him and the Major *solus* at the other end, I stopped a minute uncertain whether to enter. He called out '*Come in,*' and then ran down the room to make excuses for the peremptory order, saying he did not know who was at the door. He then welcomed us all four, and it is really not to be described how amiably polite and fascinating his manners are—on his own ground. The most finished civility, joined to the utmost degree of good-natured affability. . . We were about a quarter of an hour thus, *en Societé*, and then arrived Mrs. Fitzherbert, who told me she had written the note at Lord Berkeley's during dinner, by the Prince's order. Before she arrived, he said to me, 'So you had old *Gruffy* at dinner. How is he?' (Lord Thurlow—I had mentioned to Mrs. Fitzherbert that we expected him.) . . . On the Pavilion nights two rooms are open. There are card tables in the long room, and the Prince's band of German musicians playing in the next. He is uncommonly fond of musick. Mrs. Fitzherbert usually is at cards, Mrs. Walpole also; the other ladies walk about or converse softly, for there reigns a proper subordination in the apartment, and his affability is not abused of."[2]

[1] Benjamin Bloomfield, first Lord Bloomfield (1768–1846), sometime Chief Equerry to the Prince of Wales, afterwards Keeper of the Privy Purse to George IV.

[2] The "Jerningham Letters."

One of the results of the Seymour case was to revive the prejudice against Mrs. Fitzherbert on account of her religion. The case had excited great public interest, and the decision of the House of Lords was anything but popular. As Lord Hertford had satisfied himself of Mrs. Fitzherbert's good faith in the matter of his niece's religion, and the other members of the Seymour family had bowed to his decision, this matter (which was essentially a family one) should have been allowed to drop. But the press and the public thought differently, and the case, in all its aspects, was discussed for many months afterwards, and into the discussion was imported all the bitterness of the *odium theologicum.*

By the No-Popery party it was thought a terrible thing that a Protestant child should be handed over to the care of a "Papist woman," even though a Bishop of the Church of England superintended the child's religious education; and the Prince's undisguised efforts in the House of Lords helped to make him still more unpopular with that section of the populace. Violent articles appeared in the press, and the Protestant prejudice found vent in the inevitable cartoons. One of them was entitled, "*To be or not to be—a Protestant.*" Little Mary Seymour is represented sitting on a sofa, holding a book in her hand, entitled, "A mother's advice to her daughter respecting the true principles of the Protestant religion." Mrs. Fitzherbert is depicted wearing a rosary and crucifix, and having in her hand a book entitled, "Directions from the priests respecting the duty of a true Catholic in convert-

ing all." At an open door appears a monk, who thus addresses Mrs. Fitzherbert: "Well done, my daughter, you are now serving our holy religion. You shall next use your influence to procure us Emancipation." The injustice of this is manifest. Mrs. Fitzherbert had taken every precaution to secure that the child should be brought up in the principles of the Church of England, and in advancing the question of Emancipation she took no part whatever. But it serves as a specimen of the abuse and misrepresentations to which she was subjected on account of her religion.

Popular feeling undoubtedly ran high against Mrs. Fitzherbert at this time, and it was increased by the publication of a scandalous production, written by one Jeffries, a bankrupt jeweller, which was circulated far and wide. In 1790, shortly after the unsucessful struggle for the Regency, when the Prince was sunk in debt and difficulties which Mrs. Fitzherbert shared, the Prince changed his jeweller (always an important functionary with him), the former jeweller not having been sufficiently accommodating in an evil hour. He appointed Jeffries of Piccadilly to take his place. The appointment of jeweller to the Prince of Wales was eagerly coveted, for not only did the Prince buy many jewels for himself and his favourites without ever asking the price, but he occasionally borrowed money at exorbitant interest. Moreover his patronage brought great custom. On one occasion, to defray some pressing debt incurred by Mrs, Fitzherbert on account of the Prince, the Prince borrowed of Jeffries £1600. The Prince,

who was always affable, called at Jeffries' shop a few days afterwards and brought Mrs. Fitzherbert with him to thank the jeweller, as he said, "for having accommodated him in that little matter so quickly." Jeffries was much puffed up by this visit of the Prince, but he took a dislike to Mrs. Fitzherbert, because she did not thank him with equal effusion. He perceived "a look of mortified pride on her countenance," which perhaps was natural under the circumstances. She instinctively distrusted the fawning creature, and his grievance against her was increased by his inability to induce her to run deeply into his debt. She only purchased jewels of him to the extent of £120, and the money was promptly paid. As the loan of £1600 was also repaid with interest by the Prince, it is difficult to see what grievance the man could have had against Mrs. Fitzherbert. Nevertheless he pursued her with unceasing malignity.

When the Prince's betrothal to the Princess Caroline was announced, Jeffries loudly rejoiced at Mrs. Fitzherbert's downfall, and quoted imaginary conversations he had had with the Prince on the subject. Jeffries received from the Prince an order for wedding jewels, for which he ran up an extortionate bill. He anticipated its payment in full and, his fortune made, he threw up his business. He launched into extravagant expenditure, and contrived to get himself elected member for Coventry, which led a wit to say, "It would seem there was as much disgrace in being sent *from* Coventry as in being sent *to* it." When the Prince's debts came before the Commission

appointed by Parliament after his marriage, Jeffries' exorbitant bill came with them, and the Commission docked his charges 10 per cent. This reduction Jeffries declared brought him to bankruptcy, and he seized upon it as an excuse to justify his personal extravagance. He could not meet his bills, and was thrown into prison for debt. He came out two or three years later, with rage and hatred in his heart against Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince of Wales, who by that time were reconciled. He then wrote a pamphlet asserting that he had been cheated out of £30,000 by the Prince of Wales, for which he could get no redress. So far from this being the case, he was known to have pocketed a clear £15,000 from the royal patronage. Jeffries upbraided the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert for their "ingratitude," declared that they treated him with contumely, and said that once when he met them walking arm-in-arm on the Steine at Brighton "they regarded him with scorn." It is probable that they never gave him a thought, for Mrs. Fitzherbert barely knew the man by sight. His hatred of her and the Prince amounted to a mania, and no calumnies were too black for his vindictive malice. He seized upon the Seymour case as an opportunity to vent his malignity, but his poisoned shafts might have fallen wide of the mark, had it not been for "the delicate investigation."

In 1806 the disagreements between the Prince and Princess of Wales again assumed the form of public scandal. Except for the differences with regard to the Princess Charlotte, differences which

for the moment seemed to have been adjusted, the ill-matched pair left each other severely alone. Even those busybodies who concerned themselves with the private affairs of other people seemed content that they should remain so, and the reason given for their separation, incurable incompatibility of temper, was generally accepted as sufficient. The Princess was living at Blackheath, she was received at court with all respect; the King and the nation were on her side, she had many friends, she saw her daughter when she wished, she had all the money she needed. Seeing, therefore, that she had never made any pretence of loving her husband, she was not so much to be pitied. Her position as Princess of Wales was far better than it would have been had she remained at the court of Brunswick. She had only to conduct herself with ordinary discretion, and her future was assured. Unfortunately this was what the Princess could not do. Her unruly tongue, which had already got her into much trouble, was always blurting out some indiscretion. Her conversation was free, open, and coarse, and she discussed with all sorts of men and women, not only the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert, but other members of the royal family, especially the Queen, whom she held up to ridicule as "de old Begum." There was not a spark of malice about her, and a certain ready wit and rough good-humour were apparent in all she said, but what she said did not lose in the re-telling. Her conduct in company, like her conversation, left much to be desired. Without doing anything absolutely wrong, she behaved in



THE PRINCESS AUGUSTA
DAUGHTER OF GEORGE III
(*After the Painting by* SIR WILLIAM BEECHEY R A)

the most indiscreet way, and made intimate friends of the most undesirable people. There was about her conduct nothing of dignity and nothing of reticence, and there was much in it which, without being criminal, was highly improper, especially having regard to the difficult and delicate position in which she was placed, a young wife separated from her husband. Her sudden friendships ended not infrequently as suddenly as they began, and in one instance, that of Lady Douglas, culminated in a violent quarrel.

This woman, in revenge, made a series of slanderous accusations against the Princess, in which falsehood was cunningly mixed with truth. She and her husband, Sir John Douglas, made a declaration concerning the Princess's conduct to the Duke of Sussex in December 1805, and the Duke informed the Prince of Wales. The Prince, "seeing that this matter was such as might affect the royal succession," submitted the declaration to his legal adviser, Lord Thurlow, who, after examining it carefully, told him frankly that he did not believe Lady Douglas's statement. Here the matter, if the Prince and his advisers had been wise, should have been allowed to drop. So far, the Prince could not be blamed. When such a matter was brought before him, he, from his position as heir to the throne, and legally bound to the Princess, was compelled to take some notice of it. Unfortunately, Thurlow, though disbelieving Lady Douglas's statement, advised that evidence should be collected concerning the Princess's general behaviour, which was certainly peculiar. After many months of

investigation, a case, or what the Prince considered a case, was made out against her. Even so, no official action was taken until Lord Grenville, Fox, Erskine, and other of the Prince's friends came into office in February 1806. It was they who, at the instance of the Prince, urged the matter on the King, who at last (May 29, 1806) reluctantly consented to the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the Princess's conduct. Lord Chancellor Erskine, and Lords Grenville, Spencer, and Ellenborough conducted this inquiry, which was generally known as "the delicate investigation." Into its details it is not necessary to enter here; suffice it to say that when the Commissioners reported (July 14, 1806), they completely acquitted the Princess of the graver charges against her of criminality, but they added a censure on her general conduct, declaring it to be "such as must, especially considering her exalted rank and station, necessarily give rise to very unfavourable interpretations." The King reserved his decision on this report, and meanwhile declined to receive the Princess either in public or in private. The unhappy woman was driven almost beside herself at this attitude of the King, whom she had believed to be her best friend in England. She had not been allowed to defend herself at "the delicate investigation," but she determined that she would not be condemned unheard. The popular sympathy with her cause found her powerful friends in the ex-Lord Chancellor Eldon, and Mr. Perceval, soon to be Prime Minister. Guided by these advisers, she drew up an eloquent appeal to the King. Piteous letters also reached

him from her father and mother in Brunswick, beseeching him to do justice to their daughter. Still the King, hampered by his Ministers, kept silence. It was not until January 28, 1807, that the Princess received a letter from him, saying that as the graver charges against her were completely disproved, "he was advised that it was no longer necessary for him to decline to receive the Princess into his royal presence." At the same time he added that there were "other circumstances against her which he regarded with serious concern," and he hoped she would behave better in the future. The Princess could not afford to cavil at this not very satisfactory reply, and she wrote promptly, asking to be allowed to see the King at Windsor. The King replied that London would be more convenient, and he would let her know when he could see her. But at this juncture the Prince of Wales intervened, and said that he had put the matter into the hands of his lawyers, who would show cause why the Princess should not be received at Court. The King was therefore induced to say that he must decline to receive the Princess until the Prince's case had been submitted to him. In other words he postponed the meeting *sine die.*

The Princess then made another impassioned appeal, protesting against "this cruel, unjust, and unreasonable interposition of the Prince." Again she demanded audience forthwith, but to this letter she received no answer. She then declared that she would not be condemned unheard; she would write an account of the whole business, both the accusations against her and her defence, and let

the nation judge of the righteousness of her cause. This was prepared under Perceval's supervision, under the name of "The Book." It was printed, and five thousand copies were made ready to be launched upon the town (a few advance copies were privately circulated among Ministers and members of the royal family). Still the Princess stayed her hand, unwilling to publish unless forced to do so; at last, in despair at the delay, she wrote to the King, saying that if she were not received by him before a particular Monday, her thunderbolt would be launched on the world. It was at this juncture that the "Ministry of all the Talents" suddenly collapsed, and a new Ministry was formed, which included all the Princess's friends—Lord Eldon, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Perceval. The King adroitly referred the Princess's appeals for justice to them. "The Book" was in consequence held back, and within two or three weeks a Minute of Council was passed which absolutely acquitted the Princess, not only of the charges of criminality, but "all other particulars of conduct brought in accusation against her." In another Minute the Ministers recommended that she should have apartments allotted to her in one of the palaces, and be treated henceforth in a manner more worthy of her rank and dignity.

Thus was the Princess triumphant all along the line. "The Book" was suppressed, and the printed copies burnt. Apartments were made ready for her in Kensington Palace, she was privately received by the King, and at the very next Drawing-room she was publicly received by the Queen, who must have made a wry face. The Prince of Wales

was present at this Drawing-room, and we read, "About three o'clock the Princess of Wales came, elegantly attired. After complimenting her Majesty and the Princesses, she entered into conversation with the Prince, during which there was a profound silence in the room; all eyes were fixed on them. But nothing appeared beyond the forms of politeness; it was therefore conjectured that future connection was impossible."

This desirable consummation was not reached until 1807, after the matter had been violently agitating the public mind for more than a year. That year was probably the most troubled of Mrs. Fitzherbert's troubled life. Though she was absolutely blameless of any share in the persecution of the Princess of Wales, public feeling ran high against her. The Seymour trial had forced her against her will into publicity, and had again directed attention to the fact that she was a Roman Catholic. Close on the heels of the Seymour trial came "the delicate investigation" which, conducted as it was with secrecy and closed doors, inflamed public passion and curiosity to the highest pitch. The wildest rumours flew about. The Prince, it was known, was minded to put away his wife, and the investigation was denounced as a vile plot against the honour and life of a poor persecuted woman. Popular opinion was strongly hostile to the Prince of Wales and was ready to believe any story against him and against the "Papist woman" who was living with him as his wife. The pamphlet of Jeffries came out at this time, for he seized on the excited state of public opinion to further calumniate

Mrs. Fitzherbert. He declared that she was largely responsible for the persecution of the Princess of Wales, and asserted that she had attempted to bribe witnesses to give false evidence against her. Of course no one of any position credited this base falsehood for a moment, but the mob was not so reasonable.

Lord Carlisle wrote to the Prince of Wales (February 2, 1807): "Though I do not only believe, but *know*, how innocent Mrs. Fitzherbert is of all that has been imputed to her, yet I solemnly declare I consider her situation is becoming most perilous; measuring, as I fancy I do, the feelings and suspicions of many of the lower classes of the people. I hardly have a doubt that with half the mischievous ability of a Lord George Gordon, Mrs. Fitzherbert might at any hour be liable to insult not only in the streets but also in her own house."[1]

Mrs. Fitzherbert was much frightened; not so much on her own account as on account of others. She recalled the excesses of the Gordon riots, and fearful lest history might repeat itself and her house be pillaged and her papers seized, in a moment of panic she tore up the Brief she had received from Rome on the subject of her returning to the Prince, and she mutilated her marriage certificate, her dearest possession, by cutting off the signatures of the witnesses, lest they should be implicated.

There is no doubt that, had the Princess of Wales shown the least encouragement to these rumours, the position of Mrs. Fitzherbert would

[1] Carlisle MSS. Historical MSS. Commission.

have been one of danger from mob violence [illegible] To the Princess's honour she gave them no [illegible] she imputed no blame to Mrs Fitzherbert [illegible] showed her no ill will On the contrary, she spoke of her with uniform kindness, and the [illegible] gradually died away

The royal family also stood by her through [illegible] the unpopularity brought upon her, first by the Seymour case and then by "the delicate investigation." They knew that she was [illegible] of these causes [illegible] to do with the [illegible] continued on friendly terms [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

a bilious eye. I shall see him before I ride over to Tilney Street, so that you may give the dear Prince the latest and most correct information. Permit me to express the hope that everything relating to our beautiful little fairy [Miss Seymour] is going on as we wish, and so as to relieve your mind from all future uneasiness as to her.

"I remain with the highest regard and esteem, my dearest Mrs. Fitzherbert, ever most devotedly and truly yours,

"EDWARD."

Throughout the anxieties and sorrows to which Mrs. Fitzherbert was exposed during these years, and the years which were to follow, she found comfort and consolation in the society of her ward, Mary Seymour. Mrs. Fitzherbert was devoted to this child of her adoption, who returned her love fourfold. She was of a singularly winning and affectionate disposition, with a brightness and charm which attracted every one to her, and made sunshine wherever she was. It may be truly said that all the happiness Mrs. Fitzherbert knew in the later years of her life came to her through her adopted daughter. The loneliness and reproach of a childless woman was hers, and she grieved under it, though perhaps for her own happiness and tranquillity it was as well that she had no children. At first it seemed, too, that this child forged another link between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert; their affection for her certainly brought them both many hours of quiet domestic happiness, such as, in his better moments, the Prince loved. We

get a glimpse of their home life in Lord Albemarle's reminiscences, which with advantage may be quoted here. Little George Keppel (afterwards sixth Earl of Albemarle), was staying with his grandmother, the Dowager Lady de Clifford (governess of the Princess Charlotte), in South Audley Street, within a stone's throw of Mrs Fitzherbert's house in Tilney Street, whither he often went to play with Mary Seymour He writes —

"My visits to No 6 Tilney Street were less intended for the mistress of the mansion than for a little lady of my own age, who even then gave promise of those personal and mental attractions for which she became so distinguished in after life. This was Miss Mary Georgiana, or, as she was called by her friends, 'Minney' Seymour. . . . By my little hostess, I had the honour to be presented to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. His appearance and manners were both of a nature to produce a lively impression on the mind of a child—a merry, good-humoured man, tall, though somewhat portly in stature, in the prime of life, with laughing eyes, pouting lips, and nose which, very slightly turned up, gave a peculiar poignancy to the expression of his face. He wore a well powdered wig, adorned with a profusion of curls, which in my innocence I believed to be his own hair, as I did a very large pigtail appended thereto His clothes fitted him like a glove; his coat was single-breasted and buttoned up to the chin His nether garments were leather pantaloons and Hessian boots Round his throat was a huge white neckcloth of many folds, out of

which his chin seemed to be always struggling to emerge.

"No sooner was his Royal Highness seated in his arm chair, than my young companion would jump up on one of his knees, to which she seemed to claim a prescriptive right. Straightway would arise an animated talk between 'Prinny and Minney,' as they respectively called each other. As my father was in high favour with the Prince at this time, I was occasionally admitted to the spare knee, and to a share in the conversation, if conversation it could be called in which all were talkers and none listeners." [1]

Another playfellow of little Keppel's and Mary Seymour's was the Princess Charlotte, who at one time occasionally went to Tilney Street; but after these visits ceased, the children continued to meet at the Dowager Lady de Clifford's. Another was Grantley Berkeley, then a boy of about Miss Seymour's age, who often saw her both at London and Brighton. He writes:

"There was also a young lady, very often at the Pavilion, then a child of much my own age, Miss Seymour, who used to play with me, and who considerably won my childish love." He states that he was "rather a favourite" with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and his reminiscences concerning her at this time are interesting: "Among our lady visitors (at Berkeley House) was Mrs. Fitzherbert. . . . She had a peculiar way of standing before the fire that impressed itself strongly on my mind. All the stories

[1] "Fifty Years of my Life," by George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle, vol. i. pp. 238-240. London, 1876.

circulated about her, and most of all, the caricatures in which she was introduced that were constantly exhibited in the print-shops, attracted me as much towards her as her beauty I remember well her delicately fair yet commanding features, the gentle demeanour, that exquisite complexion she maintained, almost unimpaired by time, not only long after the departure of youth, but up to the arrival of old age, and her manner, unaffected by years, was equally well preserved [1]

Yet another of Mary Seymour's youthful adorers was George Fitzclarence, eldest son of the Duke of Clarence and the beautiful Mrs Jordan [2] This was a friendship which, begun almost in infancy, lasted through life Lady Jerningham writes of one of the Prince's birthdays at Brighton "The band were all morning playing about the town, before our window, the Prince and all his Royal guests walking about, and the two little Fitzclarences and Miss Seymour running" [3] The child was also a favourite with all the royal brothers She was always "Minney" to them Indeed she would have been spoiled had not the sweetness of her nature made such a thing impossible At this time her birthday was celebrated at Brighton in a manner almost royal We read (1806) "On the night following (Saturday), it being the natal day of the interesting little *protégée* of Mrs Fitzherbert, Miss Seymour, this young lady gave a ball and supper to a party of juvenile nobility at the Pavilion A little note of Mrs Fitzherbert's may be quoted to

[1] "Recollections," by the Hon Grantley Berkeley

[2] Afterwards first Earl of Munster

[3] "Jerningham Letters," August 14, 1806

show the affectionate terms on which she and the Prince and the little girl were at this time :—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Miss Seymour.

"TILNEY STREET (1807).

"Many thanks, my sweet child, for your letter. I am very glad your cough is better, and I hope when I return I shall have the happiness of finding you quite well. I will deliver your message to 'Prinny,'[1] and 'Wiggy,'[2] when I see them, but I am just going out and am afraid if I don't send my letter now I may be late for the post. I shall certainly be with you on Thursday for dinner. I daresay you will be very glad to have your little friend Sophia Keppel,[3] at Brighton. Pray send and ask her to dine with you on Christmas Day. Give *mille amitiés de ma part à Mlle. Amy*, and believe me, dear Minney, yours very affect^{ly},

"M. FITZHERBERT."[4]

In 1807 we find the Prince celebrating his birthday at Brighton with five of his brothers, the Dukes of York, Clarence, Kent, Cumberland, and Sussex, with the usual festivities, such as a review,

[1] The Prince of Wales.

[2] The Hon. G. T. Keppel, afterwards sixth Earl of Albemarle.

[3] Lady Sophia Keppel, daughter of the fourth Earl of Albemarle, who married (1819) Sir James Macdonald, Bart., and died 1824.

[4] For the above letter, written by Mrs. Fitzherbert to Miss Seymour (afterwards Mrs. Dawson Damer), I am indebted to the surviving daughters of the late Mrs. Dawson Damer, Lady Blanche Haygarth and Lady Constance Leslie. I am also indebted to them for other letters quoted in this book, except when otherwise specified, for several of the illustrations duly noted elsewhere, and for much kind assistance, impossible to specify in detail. My indebtedness to these ladies is great.

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY MRS. FITZHERBERT, SHOWING HER SIGNATURE



ringing of bells, roasting of oxen, illuminations. At the review we read, "Lady Haggerston,[1] and Miss Seymour, the Lord Chancellor, Lady Headfort, Mr. Sheridan, and Mrs. Smith[2] (*sic*) were in the Prince's landau. Mrs. Fitzherbert was detained at home by indisposition." It was almost a family party, and it will be seen that Mrs. Fitzherbert's relatives and friends were then in high favour.

In 1808 the Prince also kept his birthday at Brighton, and celebrated it with his brothers by a grand review on the Brighton Downs. The Prince was in Hussar uniform as Colonel of the Tenth Light Dragoons: his sabre was of the richest description, and the sabretache and saddle-cloth were of scarlet, superbly embroidered, and nearly covered with gold. He rode his grey charger, one of the finest proportioned Arabians ever seen in this country. In the Prince's barouche were Mrs. Fitzherbert and Miss Seymour. The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, Lord and Lady Melbourne, Lord Erskine, and other famous personages were present." "Never," writes the chronicler, "was there such a splendid and brilliant display of company ever seen in this part of the world before." It was memorable in another way, for this was the last of the *Prince's birthday* celebrations in which Mrs. Fitzherbert took part.

[1] Mrs. Fitzherbert's sister.

[2] Mrs. Walter Smythe, Mrs. *Fitzherbert's sister-in-law.*

CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL SEPARATION

(1808–1811)

MRS. FITZHERBERT'S happiness was now clouded by the intimacy which had sprung up between the Prince of Wales and the Marchioness of Hertford.[1] The fickle Prince was once more bent on supplanting her by another lady, and though for some time there was no open breach between them, their relations gradually became strained. The indirect cause of this unhappy state of affairs arose out of the Seymour case, of which it was aptly said, "It gained Mrs. Fitzherbert a child, but lost her a husband." When the issue of the trial hung in the balance, it will be remembered that Mrs. Fitzherbert had recourse to her friend Lady Hertford, and begged her to intercede with Lord Hertford (as head of the Seymour family) concerning the guardianship of Mary Seymour. The result was that the child was entrusted to Mrs. Fitzherbert's care, but unfortunately this appeal to Lady Hertford led to another development. The Prince of Wales was also concerned in this negotiation, and he saw Lady Hertford frequently on the subject. The impressionable Prince was much attracted to her: their intercourse

[1] Isabella, eldest daughter and co-heiress of Charles Ingram, ninth Viscount Irvine, wife of second Marquess of Hertford.

gradually deepened into intimacy, and so in the Seymour case may be found the origin of an intrigue which ultimately gave Lady Hertford a complete ascendency over the Prince, and drove Mrs. Fitzherbert from the field.

Lady Hertford was a woman of quite different calibre to Lady Jersey; she was correct in her conduct, proud, and reserved. The wife of an enormously wealthy Tory peer, who owned many pocket-boroughs, she was a great lady in politics as well as a leading personage in society. She was an ardent Protestant, and strongly opposed to Catholic Emancipation, on this point being in direct opposition to Mrs. Fitzherbert. Lady Hertford was a woman of mature age, and she was neither very beautiful nor very clever. But she had a stately presence and superb figure, a dignified carriage and admirable manners. She had a passion for dress, and was said to be the best-dressed woman in London. Except on this last point one would have thought that she had little in common with the Prince of Wales. Yet it was perhaps the opposite qualities in her that attracted him. He did not find her confidence easy to win: she feared for her reputation, and at first she repelled his advances in a way that drove the Prince almost to despair. Creevey tells us that "when he (the Prince) was first in love with Lady Hertford, I have seen tears run down his cheeks at dinner, and he has been dumb for hours."[1] There is no doubt that Lady Hertford's [illegible] only attracted the Prince the more. [illegible]

[1] "The Creevey Papers," vol. [illegible] [illegible] exaggeration.

his usual symptoms of being very much in love—tears, prayers, bloodletting, great excitability, letters of enormous length—just as when he was a young man. These symptoms must have been very trying for Mrs. Fitzherbert to witness. She knew them well, but for a time she ignored them, hoping that this love attack would pass in the same way as other *petits amours* of the Prince had passed. She had confidence also in Lady Hertford; she thought her to be her friend, but in time she saw that her confidence was misplaced. Lady Hertford was very vain and inordinately ambitious. To have the Prince at her feet undoubtedly flattered her vanity, but at first it was not easy to see how her ambition could be advanced by listening to his addresses, for the Prince had no power, and very little influence. Indeed, she does not seem to have softened until the Regency was in sight. Like many women, she loved the sense of power, and it pleased her to have people paying her homage, and craving her good offices. It is certain that Lady Hertford never cared for the Prince, but after their friendship became a recognised fact, for some years she ruled him absolutely. He would spend hours at Manchester House, the hours which he used to spend with Mrs. Fitzherbert at Tilney Street. Yet it may be doubted that the Prince's relations with Lady Hertford were ever more than what is absurdly called "platonic." She was willing to be his Egeria, but she always repudiated the idea that she was his mistress. The Princess of Wales, who followed all her husband's *affaires* with fierce curiosity,

declared "that Lady H[ertford] was a woman of intact virtue—it is only a *liaison* of vanity on the part of my better half, but it will not last long—she is too formal for him."[1]

It seems to have been merely an intellectual adultery; but Mrs. Fitzherbert found this more trying to bear than any of the Prince's amours. She saw her influence being slowly undermined, and the Prince's manner towards herself change from warm affection to coldness and indifference. Still she suffered and said nothing, until at last Lady Hertford, who was very jealous of her reputation, discovered that she was being talked about. She then made the Prince insist that Mrs. Fitzherbert should dine at Carlton House or at the Pavilion whenever she dined there, and should always appear at those entertainments where she and the Prince were present. Whether Lady Hertford did this from a desire to humiliate her rival, or only from a wish to protect her reputation in the eyes of the world, the result was equally mortifying to the unhappy Mrs. Fitzherbert. This state of affairs went on for two years, and Mrs. Fitzherbert was forced into being a witness of, and apparently a consenting party to, this intimacy between Lady Hertford and the Prince of Wales—and this despite her tears, entreaties, and expostulations. So wounding was this to her self-respect that she would have refused to be present had not Lady Hertford, who, with her lord, was a guardian of Miss Seymour, appointed by the House of Lords, always

[1] Lady Charlotte Bury's "Diary Illustrative of the Times of George IV."

held over her the threat that unless she did what she wished she would take away the child. The circumstances, therefore, were of peculiar cruelty. Lord Stourton gives the following account of the situation :—

"Lady Hertford, anxious for the preservation of her own reputation, which she was not willing to compromise with the public, even when she ruled the Prince with the most absolute sway, exposed Mrs. Fitzherbert at this time to very severe trials, which at last almost, as she said, ruined her health and destroyed her nerves. Attentions were required from her towards Lady Hertford herself, even when most aware of her superior influence over the Prince, and these attentions were extorted by the menace of taking away her child. To diminish her apparent influence in public as well as private was now the object. When at Brighton, the Prince, who had passed part of his mornings with Mrs. Fitzherbert on friendly terms at her own house, did not even notice her in the slightest manner at the Pavilion on the same evenings, and she afterwards understood that such attentions would have been reported to her rival. She was frequently on the point of that separation which afterwards took place, but was prevented by the influence of the royal family from carrying her resolution into effect."[1]

Bitterly now must Mrs. Fitzherbert have regretted her imprudence in returning to the Prince after his marriage to the Princess of Wales. For her present situation she had largely herself to blame. She now besought the Prince to let her

[1] Langdale's "Memoirs."

go, but he would not; he wished to keep her, so to speak, in reserve. His vanity would not suffer him to imagine that Mrs. Fitzherbert could ever wish to leave him voluntarily. Now, as always, he was ready to promise her anything, but his promises in private were falsified by his performances in public. At this juncture Mrs. Fitzherbert addressed to him the following pathetic appeal:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales

"The constant state of anxiety I am perpetually kept in with respect to your proceedings, and the little satisfaction I experience when occasionally you make partial communications to me, have determined me to address you by letter.

"You must be well aware of the misery we have both suffered for the last three or four years on a subject most painful to me, and to all those who are attached and interested about you. It has nearly destroyed the entire comfort and happiness of both our lives; it has so completely destroyed mine, that neither my health nor my spirits can bear it any longer. What am I to think of the inconsistency of your conduct, when, scarcely three weeks ago, you voluntarily declared to me that this sad affair was quite at an end, and in less than a week afterwards the whole business was begun all over again? The purport of my writing to you is to implore you to come to a resolution upon this business. You must decide, and that decision must be done immediately, that I may know what line to pursue. I beg your

answer may be a written one, to avoid all unpleasant conversations upon a subject so heart-rending to one whose whole life has been dedicated to you, and whose affection for you none can surpass."[1]

This letter had no effect. The Prince in private, no doubt, promised amendment, but he still insisted upon Mrs. Fitzherbert's attending the Pavilion, apparently as chaperone to Lady Hertford; and in public, beyond the most formal greeting, he did not take the slightest notice of her presence. Thus she, who had formerly been the reigning lady, hostess in all but name, now found her place usurped by Lady Hertford, and herself expected to assist in the triumph of her rival. Her pride revolted at such a humiliation, and at last she determined to set the Prince at defiance. She sent him an ultimatum. She would go no more to the Pavilion, she said; she would not part with the child, and she vowed that if the Prince thus robbed her of all she loved, or allowed her to be so robbed, she would be driven into retaliation. The Prince, of course, did not dare (it may be doubted if he ever wished) to put Lady Hertford's threat into execution, and take Miss Seymour from her. But he resented in the strongest manner Mrs. Fitzherbert's disobedience to his commands in absenting herself from the Pavilion. The difference between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert was much regretted by the royal

[1] This letter, unsigned, was found among Mrs. Fitzherbert's papers after her death. It is evidently a copy of one sent to the Prince, and probably was not burnt with the others, because it was mislaid. It is in Mrs. Fitzherbert's handwriting. I give a facsimile of the original. The date must have been about the end of the year 1809.

The constant state of anxiety I am
perpetually kept in with respect
to your proceedings and the
little satisfaction I experience
when occasionally you make partial
communications to me has determined
me to address you by letter —

You must be well
aware of the misery we have
both suffered for the last three or
four years on a subject most
painful to me & to all those who
are attached & interested about you
it has quite destroyed the comfort
& happiness of both our lives it has
so completely destroyed mine that
neither my health & spirits can
bear it any longer, what am I

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY MRS.
BEFORE THEIR

to think of the Inconsistency of
your Conduct when scarcely three
weeks ago you Voluntarily declared
to me that this sad affair was
finished and an end 2 in less than
a Week afterward the whole
Business was begun over again
The purport of my writing to you
is to implore you to come to
a final Resolution upon this
business you must decide and
that decision must be done
immediately — that I may know
what line I have to pursue
I beg your answer may be
a written one to avoid all
unpleasant Conversation upon
a Subject so heart rending to one
who's whole life has been dedicated
to you & who's affection for you are
unbounded

RT TO THE PRINCE OF WALES SHORTLY
ARATION

family, who still counselled her not to break completely with the Prince. The Duke of York and the Duke of Clarence tried their best to bring about a reconciliation, of course without effect, and only brought the Prince's wrath down upon their heads. The Duke of Kent was wiser, and mindful of the dangers of interfering in quarrels between husband and wife, declined even to discuss the matter with Mrs. Fitzherbert.

H.R.H. the Duke of Kent to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"CASTLE HILL LODGE,
"*Saturday, December* 30, 1800.

"MY DEAREST MRS. FITZHERBERT,—I have this moment received your very kind letter, which, agreeable to your request, shall be shown to the Prince the very first time I see him, which I expect will be either Monday or Wednesday. In the meanwhile, however, I must beg to assure you that, in the conversation alluded to between my brother and me, I never *did* understand that you had made use of my name as being acquainted with, or sanctioning, your intention of absenting yourself from the Pavilion. Indeed, if any such suggestion had been dropped, I should have conceived it as arising in error, as there could not be the slightest foundation for it, it having singularly so happened that I have not had the pleasure of seeing you since August, and that the only time you did me the favour to write, was solely *upon* my own concerns, unconnected with any other circumstance whatsoever However, what has passed on this occasion renders it absolutely necessary for me to implore

you, whenever I have the happiness of seeing you (which I must say is a very great gratification to me at all times, from the kind and affectionate interest you have ever shewn me), that we *never* should touch upon that most delicate subject—the state of things between the Prince and yourself. Then I shall always be able, as I am now, conscientiously to say that you have never sought to intermeddle *me* in it, which I well know will always be the furthest thing from your thoughts. In venturing to say this, I do it with the more confidence as I am sure you will never suspect my silence on that *one* subject to proceed from a want of interest about it, when I owe so much to both parties for all the kindness I have ever experienced from them. . . .

"To yourself I scarcely need add that I shall ever remain bound by every tie of friendship and attachment, and that I hope you will believe the sincerity of my professions when I repeat the sentiments of warm regard and high esteem, with which I ever am, my dearest Mrs. Fitzherbert, yours most faithfully and devotedly,

"EDWARD."

Mrs. Fitzherbert's determination to go no more to the Pavilion widened the breach between her and the Prince. They were now virtually separated, and he fell more and more under the dominion of Lady Hertford. Presently it was whispered everywhere that Mrs. Fitzherbert's influence over him was gone. This was what the Prince wished, and indeed had been the true reason of his treating

her distantly in public. There was one thing the Prince dearly loved, and that was popularity. For the last few years he had been steadily growing more and more unpopular. This was due wholly to his own misconduct, and more particularly to his treatment of the Princess of Wales, but his self-esteem would not admit that he could possibly be to blame, and it pleased him to think that it was on account of Mrs. Fitzherbert and her religion. Lady Hertford had artfully insinuated that his close connection with a Roman Catholic, especially at a time when Catholic Emancipation was the burning political question, must surely do him harm with the country, and that it was most desirable for public reasons that Mrs. Fitzherbert should be relegated to the background. This advice the Prince listened to eagerly, for it coincided with his inclination. Hence arose the many slights he put upon the unfortunate Mrs. Fitzherbert in public, all for the purpose of showing that he was no longer under the influence of a Roman Catholic.

Mrs. Fitzherbert's quarrel with the Prince coincided with a time of great public excitement and a dangerous crisis in the royal family. She was deprived, too, of the advice of her best friend, the Duke of York, whose time was wholly occupied just then by his own affairs. The Duke's conduct as commander-in-chief was brought before Parliament in connection with the notorious Mrs. Clarke. This woman was accused of trafficking in promotions, and she said, untruly, that she had done so with the knowledge and connivance of the Duke. The public scandal raised in connection with this

Parliamentary investigation was very great. It is not necesssary to enter into details; suffice it to say, that the Duke was acquitted of the graver charges of corruption, but he felt bound to resign for a time his appointment as commander-in-chief. Mrs. Fitzherbert's sympathies were all with the Duke, and she wrote to him, receiving the following reply:—

H.R.H. the Duke of York to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"STABLE YARD,
"*Tuesday evening, August* 8.

"A thousand thanks, my dear Friend, for your kind note. Be assured that I am truly sensible of your friendly anxiety about me. I am, thank God, tolerably well in health, and bear up, as much as I can, under present circumstances. As soon as I am able to free myself, you may depend upon your being one of the first persons upon whom I shall call. Yours most affectionately,

"FREDERICK."

The King's reason had long trembled in the balance; his domestic griefs, added to his public anxieties, hastened the crisis. The changes in the Government, and the proceedings against his favourite son, the Duke of York, had driven him nearly insane; but the crowning blow was the death of his beloved daughter, the lovely Princess Amelia, who died November 2, 1810. The old King's mind gave way utterly under this last sorrow. Doctor John Willis was again called in, this time without result. Despite all efforts at concealment, it soon became known that the King

was hopelessly insane The Queen and Perceval, the Prime Minister, endeavoured to follow the precedents of 1789—to grasp all the power they could, and fetter the Prince of Wales as much as possible But this time the Prince was too strong for the Queen For one thing, the King was twenty years older, and there was no ray of hope that he would recover, for another, Perceval was not Pitt It is true that temporary restrictions on the Regency were carried by narrow majorities in Parliament, but every one knew they were not worth the paper they were written on, and when the Prince agreed to accept the Regency, he did so under protest, so far as the restrictions were concerned The next question was, who would form the new Government, for it was supposed on both sides of the House that the Prince would begin his Regency by dismissing Perceval and the Tories, and call in Lords Grey and Grenville, and his friends the Whigs But the Prince, when pressed for a definite declaration, asked for time to consider He had made his peace with the Queen, who told him that a change of Government at this juncture would certainly kill the King This made the Prince shed tears, and with a great show of devotion to the King, he declared he was ready to sacrifice his personal preferences to the welfare of the State The truth was, the Prince in his heart did not want the Whigs in office He disliked Lords Grey and Grenville quite as much as he disliked Perceval, and he had already thrown over Catholic Emancipation, to which the Whigs were pledged Still he affected to hesitate.

It was at this juncture that he sent for Mrs. Fitzherbert, who was then at Brighton. She must have been considerably surprised to receive the royal summons. Since she had absented herself from the Pavilion contrary to the Prince's command, she had rarely seen him. Public affairs claimed his attention, and his leisure was now spent wholly with Lady Hertford. The breach between him and Mrs. Fitzherbert had widened into a virtual separation ; in political affairs, she was not consulted ; in the intrigues which gathered around the King's illness, and the Prince's claim to the Regency, she had this time taken no part. Lady Hertford was supreme. When, therefore, the Prince, on the eve of assuming the Regency, expressly sent for her, she must have thought he wished to see her on some matter personal to herself. Perhaps he was at last going to fulfil his promises, and, now that he had the power, make her tardy compensation for the wrongs she had suffered. Such a thought may well have passed through her mind as she drove up to London. But when she arrived at Carlton House, and was ushered into the presence of the Regent-elect, she found that it was on quite a different matter that he wished to see her. Lord Stourton gives the following account (which he had from Mrs. Fitzherbert) of this interview :—

"He [the Prince] told her, that he had sent for her to ask her opinion, and that he demanded it of her, with regard to the party to which he was about, as Regent, to confide the administration of the country. At his commands, she urged, in the most forcible manner she was

able, his adherence to his former political friends Knowing all his engagements to that party, she used every argument and every entreaty to induce him not to sever himself from them 'Only retain them, sir, six weeks in power If you please, you may find some pretext to dismiss them at the end of that time, but do not break with them without some pretext or other' Such was her request to him He answered, 'It was impossible as he had promised,' but at the same time she observed he seemed much overpowered by the effort it cost him Finding that resistance to a determination so fixed was unavailing, she asked to be allowed to return to Brighton, which she did, but previously to leaving him, she said, that as he had done her the honour of imposing on her his commands of freely declaring her sentiments upon this occasion, she hoped he would permit her, before she left him, to offer one suggestion, which she trusted he would not take amiss

"She then urged upon him, as strongly as she was able, the disadvantages which must accrue to his future happiness from treating his daughter, the Princess Charlotte, with so little kindness. 'You now, sir,' she said, 'may mould her at your pleasure, but soon it will not be so, and she may become from mismanagement, a thorn in your side for life' 'That is your opinion, madam,' was his only reply "[1]

It is not easy to see what were the Prince's motives in sending for Mrs. Fitzherbert at the

[1] Langdale's "Memoirs" "Lord S[illegible] [illegible] 143, 144

time. He did not want her advice on the political situation, for his mind was made up before she came, and he did not follow the advice she offered. Perhaps he wished to convey to her by his manner, for he lacked the courage to tell her frankly, that now, when he was about to be vested with authority and power, their old confidential relations must cease, and any intercourse between them henceforth be distant and formal. Perhaps it was only vanity, for he was one of the vainest of men; he wished her to see him in his new *rôle* as Regent-elect, and impress her accordingly. Perhaps (for we will give him the benefit of the doubt) his love for her may have flickered up again: he wished to see her, and the pretext of consulting her on political matters was merely an excuse to save his dignity. She had been his faithful companion through storm and stress for many years, and even he, the most ungrateful of men, could hardly cast her aside in his hour of prosperity without a word. It is possible that had she humbled herself before him, had she wept, or reproached him, he might have shed on her some rays of his favour; but she was apparently too proud, and felt herself too deeply wronged, to even allude to their personal relations during the interview. Pride stood in the way. They parted without a word on the subject which was probably nearest their hearts, and when the doors of Carlton House closed behind Mrs. Fitzherbert, the opportunity of reconciliation was gone for ever.

A few days later it was announced that the Prince had decided to keep on Mr. Perceval and

the Tories, and this decision, it was well known, was due in the main to the influence of Lady Hertford and the intrigues of Manchester House.

On February 5, 1811, the Prince of Wales took the oaths required of him as Regent, and formally entered on his nineteen years of rule—nine as Regent and ten as King. The beginning of his Regency may be regarded as coincident with the ending of his connection with Mrs. Fitzherbert; for though he had occasional communications with her until a later date, yet with his assumption of the Regency their married life finally closed. There were many reasons for this, some private and some political. The chief private reason was, of course, the influence of Lady Hertford; the political one was the question of Roman Catholic Emancipation.

This question had been shelved by Pitt, who, though convinced of its justice, promised George III. never to bring it forward during his lifetime; it was a subject on which the King felt so deeply that any discussion of it was likely to upset his sanity. He threatened to abdicate rather than give his assent to such a measure, which he regarded as a breach of his coronation oath. So great was the respect entertained by many of the leading Roman Catholic laity for the King that they fell in with Pitt's views, and would never have urged the question so long as it endangered the [illegible] of the King. But now that the King was hopelessly insane, and his son had become Regent, the situation changed, and Emancipation was again forced into the forefront of practical politics. [illegible]

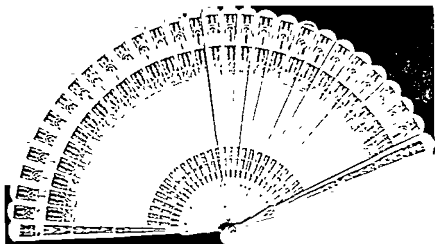
his youth the Prince of Wales had allowed it to be understood that he favoured the Roman Catholic claims; and though he did not positively declare himself, he wrote, spoke, and acted as though he approved of Emancipation. His friendship with Fox, who was the great champion of toleration, his close connection with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and his intimacy with many Roman Catholics, helped to foster the belief. It may be doubted if the Prince had ever any settled convictions on the subject, and his apparent approval of this reform may have been dictated chiefly by a desire to annoy and oppose his father. Mrs. Fitzherbert never discussed the subject in public, and if it came up in the course of conversation she always put it aside. Of course there was no doubt that her sympathies were with those of her faith, though she refrained from taking any active part, and certainly did not influence the Prince. So the question slept in the Prince's mind until he came under the influence of Lady Hertford. Lady Hertford seems to have persuaded him that he would gain popularity by the No-Popery cry, and one of his first acts, after assuming the Regency, was to make it generally known that he was strongly opposed to the Catholic claims. The surest way in which he could emphasise this was by letting the world see his close intimacy with the ultra-Protestant Hertfords, who were leaders of the anti-Emancipation movement. It was necessary also that he should show publicly that he was no longer under the influence of the Roman Catholic Mrs. Fitzherbert.

The Regent sought an occasion of publicly

demonstrating this, and the opportunity soon came. Always a lover of display, he determined to inaugurate his Regency by a splendid *fête* at Carlton House. The *fête* was ostensibly given in honour of the exiled royal family of France, though the real reason was to display the Regent's magnificence, and to make a parade of his generosity. The date was fixed for June 19, 1811. For weeks before nothing was talked of in the *beau monde* but the coming *fête;* it was rumoured that no court entertainment so splendid had ever been given within living memory, and there was a great rush for invitations. It was at first said that no one was to be asked under the rank of a peer's son or daughter, but that limitation gave offence, and was cancelled. In all some two thousand invitations were sent out. Mrs. Fitzherbert received an invitation. As this was the first time she was to make a public appearance at the Regent's house since his assumption of the Regency, she was naturally anxious to know how she was to be received. She had no intention of submitting again to the slights which had caused her to absent herself from the Pavilion. She made inquiries in a well-informed quarter, and discovered that there was to be a royal supper-table accommodating a large number of distinguished guests, including the French royal family, those members of the English royal family who were present, and persons especially honoured by the Regent, including of course Lord and Lady Hertford and their son, Lord Yarmouth. [illegible] Fitzherbert was not bidden [illegible] if she went to Carlton House [illegible]

to fight for her supper at a buffet with the general company. The omission was the more marked, because, "on all former occasions, to avoid etiquette, in circumstances of such delicacy as regarded her own position with reference to the Prince, it had been customary to sit at table regardless of rank." This had always secured her a seat at the Prince's table, and she was very tenacious (perhaps unduly so) of this small concession to her peculiar position. The Regent had always promised that when he had the power he would do everything to put her right with the world; but now, so far from doing this, he was even taking away the slight privileges hitherto conceded to her. This change of place she had no difficulty in tracing to Lady Hertford, and she regarded it as "a systematic intention to degrade her before the public."

Mrs. Fitzherbert would not, however, believe that this humiliation was to be offered to her unless she heard it from the Regent's own lips. With characteristic courage she went to Carlton House, and demanded of the Regent where she was to sit. He said, "You know, madam, you have no place." "None, sir," she replied, "but such as you choose to give me." Deeply mortified, she withdrew. She determined that she would not go to the *fête*, and she told those of the royal family who were her friends of her determination. The Duke of York and other of the royal brothers endeavoured to get the Regent to alter his arrangement of the table in Mrs Fitzherbert's favour, but they found him inflexible. He held that the exceptional courtesy the Prince of Wales had extended to her in





(1) IVORY FAN GIVEN BY THE PRINCE OF WALES TO MRS. FITZHERBERT

(2) SATCHEL EMBROIDERED BY MRS. FITZHERBERT AT THE AGE OF SEVENTY-FIVE.

[illegible]

such matters could not be continued to her by the Regent at his court He could no longer waive the rules of precedence in her favour, nor could he set the etiquette of the court at defiance He had no wish to exclude her from the *fête*, but he wished her in future to understand her place Mrs Fitzherbert, however, declined to fall in with his arrangements, she held that she occupied a position *sui generis*, and was therefore entitled to exceptional treatment, so she stayed away Under these altered circumstances she declined to attend his court

The "other wife,' the Princess of Wales, was not invited at all She took the neglect very good-humouredly, declaring that she "was like an Arch bishop's wife, who does not partake of her husband's honours,' she allowed the ladies of her suite to go and to show that she bore no malice gave them new dresses for the occasion The Princess Charlotte was also excluded on the ground of her youth, which, as she was now fifteen she thought "very hard' Magnificent and wonderful was the Carlton House *fête*, vying in splendour with a coronation banquet, or Belshazzar s feast London talked of nothing else for weeks afterwards—such dresses, such jewels such decorations, such a dazzling display of female beauty, such princely hospitality had never been seen before The Regent was in his element presiding over all this splendour, and his exquisite courtesy to the exiled royal family of France was the theme of universal admiration But the distinguished absentees were noticed as well as the distinguished guests and the *mot* ran

round the brilliant assembly that the "two wives were sitting at home."

The Carlton House *fête* brought matters to a crisis between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert. She was cruelly wounded by his broken promises and unchivalrous treatment, he was exasperated by her refusal to obey his commands. The royal family had long opposed her desire for separation, but now, "aware of the peculiar circumstances of her case, and the distressing nature of her general situation, they no longer hesitated to agree with her, that no advantage was to be gained by further postponement of her own anxious desire to close her connection with the Prince, and to retire once more into private life." The last time that Mrs. Fitzherbert met the Regent, before their final separation, was the day after the Carlton House *fête*, at an assembly at Devonshire House. "The Duchess of Devonshire, taking her by her arm, said to her, 'You must come and see the Duke in his own room, as he is suffering from a fit of the gout, but he will be glad to see an old friend.' In passing through the rooms she saw the Prince and Lady Hertford in a *tête-à-tête* conversation, and nearly fainted under all the impressions which then rushed upon her mind; but, taking a glass of water, she recovered and passed on."[1]

Soon after this incident a formal separation was agreed upon; the Duke of York acting as intermediary between the parties. In this matter Mrs. Fitzherbert took the initiative; it was she who wished for a final separation, not the Regent. It has been

[1] Langdale's "Memoirs."

said that he wished for it also, and made her position intolerable so as to throw the onus upon her. There seems no proof of this. The Regent certainly wished, on personal as well as political grounds, to put Mrs. Fitzherbert on one side, until such time as it should suit his royal will and pleasure to bring her forward again. If she was reasonable he had no desire to break with her wholly. But Mrs. Fitzherbert would not fall in with the Regent's plan, so wounding to her self-respect and her honour. She, who regarded herself as his true wife, refused to play the *rôle* of complaisant mistress and dance attendance on the humour of the hour, to be ignored one day and smiled upon the next, according to the royal pleasure of her Sultan. For the last few years her life had been one of misery. So long as the Prince had stood by her she had bravely borne all the anxieties, misrepresentations, abuse and popular execration which arose from her connection with him; but when he turned upon her and ill-treated her, her fortitude gave way, and her health became broken by the treatment she received. In truth she was tired. She could not go on any longer; even had her spirit been willing, her bodily strength would have failed her. She was now fifty-five years of age and after all she had gone through she might reasonably look forward to a few years of peace and quietness before she died. She was no longer quite alone, for her adopted daughter was with her. In the negotiation for the separation Mrs. Fitzherbert made only one stipulation, namely, that she should retain the guardianship of Minney Seymour.

The Regent made no objection; he knew that Miss Seymour was in the best possible hands, and he had never seriously thought of taking her away from Mrs. Fitzherbert. The money question had been solved some three or four years previously, when the Prince's attachment to Lady Hertford first became manifest. The will which the Prince had made in Mrs. Fitzherbert's favour in 1786, as well as the pension of £3000 a year guaranteed her in 1784, had been commuted for an annuity of £6000 a year, guaranteed by a mortgage on the Pavilion at Brighton.[1] In this matter Mr. Errington again acted on behalf of his niece, but it would seem she owed her pension to the good will of the Queen and the Duke of York. Lord Stourton says:—

"To the Duke of York and the Queen Mrs. Fitzherbert was indebted for £6000 a year in a mortgage deed, which they procured for her on the Palace at Brighton: being aware, as she said, that till that period she had no legal title to a single shilling should she survive the Prince. Indeed, at one period she had debts on her own jointures, incurred principally on account of the Prince. . . ."[2]

The Regent cleared off these debts also without demur. Indeed, as the Duke of York afterwards

[1] This document, dated March 16, 1808, is entitled, "Device for securing the payment of an annuity of £6000 a year during the Prince's lifetime: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Henry Errington, Esq., in trust for Mrs. Fitzherbert." It was placed by Mrs. Fitzherbert in 1833, with other papers, in Coutts's Bank. It appears on Langdale's list as "No 1. The mortgage on the Palace at Brighton." Langdale, *op. cit.*, p. 87. It is purely a legal document, and not necessary to be quoted here.

[2] Langdale, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

testified, he seemed glad to do whatever was asked, so far as money went The houses in Tilney Street and at Brighton were Mrs Fitzherbert s own property, she had besides her separate jointure The arrangements for the separation were soon completed, and from that time to quote Lord Stourton, Mrs Fitzherbert "never opened the door of her house' to the Regent There was no public separation, and very few people knew the facts Mrs Fitzherbert was not given to talking about her affairs, and the Regent naturally did not care to say much about it Conscience was never quite dead in him, though its voice was dulled by flattery and self-indulgence Even when their relations were most strained he had silently rendered her the homage which vice often unwillingly, pays to virtue Though passion was long dead he still retained for her feelings *of respect* He *knew her to be a good* woman, and in his heart of hearts he regarded her as his wife Another person thought her his wife also — no other than the poor persecuted Princess of Wales whose turn was to come next "The Princess of Wales' wrote Lady Charlotte Bury, "speaks highly of Mrs Fitzherbert She always says, 'That is the Prince's true wife She is an excellent woman it is a great pity he ever broke with her'

CHAPTER VII

THE REGENCY

(1811–1820)

In the brilliancy of the Regency Mrs. Fitzherbert had neither part nor lot. This is not the place to review the glories of that period, its beaux, its dandyism, its extravagances in costume, its affectations in manners, all of which owed their origin to the Regent. The Georgian era was already slowly dying, but it was dying in a blaze of meretricious splendour. Left to himself, separated from the only woman who cared for him, her restraining influence gone, the Regent now let himself drift down the slopes of self-indulgence and sensual gratification, which brought him eventually to a miserable end. With no one to foster his good impulses, or to encourage him in the paths of duty, he became in private life the selfish voluptuary, and in politics the weak vacillating creature of his later years. From the day of his separation from Mrs. Fitzherbert can be traced a steady deterioration both in body and mind. It was the Nemesis of his treatment of her.

Lady Hertford must be regarded as the *dame regnante* of the Regency. Not a day passed, when the Regent was in London, but he visited her; and his brougham, with the purple blinds close drawn,

was a familiar sight as he drove to Manchester House. Lord Hertford held high posts at court; he was appointed the Lord Chamberlain and given the Garter. His son, Lord Yarmouth, also held appointments at court. He was a noted dandy who set the fashion in dress, and became the Regent's chief adviser in matters sartorial. His red whiskers and his title earned for him the nickname of "Bloater."[1] The Duke of Cumberland, a Protestant of the most Orange type, had taken the place of the Duke of York as chief adviser to his eldest brother. The Duke of York rarely saw the Regent, and so Mrs Fitzherbert lost for a time her best friend at court.

Mrs Fitzherbert might have consoled herself with the thought that if she took no part in the Regent's magnificence she had also no share in his annoyances. These as time went on became very great. The question of the Regent's household expenses and his debts was never satisfactorily settled, and proved a chronic source of irritation. His continued excesses told upon his health—he was nearly always unwell; his growing corpulency wounded his vanity and defied all his efforts to check it. In political matters he was ever shifty and vacillating; neither side would trust him, and he bid fair to fall between the two stools of Whig and Tory. He had fallen into the hands of unworthy favourites, and, swayed first by one and then by another, he hardly seemed to have a will of his

[1] He succeeded his father as third Marquess of Hertford. He married the celebrated Maria Fagani. He was the original of Thackeray's Marquess of Steyne in "Vanity Fair." Disraeli portrayed him more truly in "Coningsby" as Lord Monmouth.

own. His domestic affairs became daily more exasperating to him. Time avenged the slighted counsels of Mrs. Fitzherbert with regard to the Princess Charlotte. She had warned the Regent of the evil consequences of treating his daughter with so little kindness, and her words were abundantly justified. The high-spirited girl, stung by her father's injustice, and alienated by his harsh treatment, openly espoused the cause of her mother. In vain the Regent interposed to check the intercourse between them—the young Princess defied him. Not daring to punish her as he wished, he retaliated on her mother, who was compelled to leave Kensington Palace, where she had been placed by George III., and had to retire to a small house in Connaught Place. Ill in health, worried by his debts, and harassed by domestic quarrels and countless annoyances, some sympathy must be extended to the unfortunate Regent. The women of his family were especially troublesome, and they were by no means so easily disposed of as Mrs. Fitzherbert had been. It was all his own fault, of course, but surely never was man so plagued by women before. His mother, feeling that her power was slipping away, was, as the Speaker said, "voracious in her claims," and worried her son even when he was ill; his sisters, usually so patient, had at last spoken out, and were clamouring for the money to set up separate establishments of their own; his daughter was in rebellion, and his consort was making him an object of popular contempt. Thus he, the magnificent Regent, presented the undignified spectacle of a man contending against all the women of his family.

Chief among all these women in revolt was the irrepressible Princess of Wales; she was a perpetual thorn in the side of her husband. Now that the Regent had declared open war by turning her out of her house, she delighted in thwarting him, and in making him appear ridiculous and contemptible. She wounded him in his tenderest part—his vanity. Despite her trials the Princess of Wales preserved an undaunted spirit; she seemed rather to enjoy the strife, and she breathed forth threatenings and defiance against her husband. Popular feeling was wholly on her side, and on the side of the Princess Charlotte. "Don't desert your mother, dear," shouted the mob when she drove in the streets, and the young Princess responded with bows and smiles. The Regent was attacked by the press in language of unparalleled violence and scurrility. When he opened Parliament not a cheer greeted him, and cries of "Down with the Regent!" were by no means infrequent. The Regent ascribed all this to the Princess of Wales; his hatred of her became a mania, and once he was goaded into the following undignified exclamation. Some one at Carlton House was holding forth about the victories of the Duke of Wellington in the north. The Regent burst out, "Damn the north! and damn the south! and damn Wellington! The question is, *how* am I to be rid of this damned Princess of Wales?" That was a question that was not solved for many a long day. But the Regent took it into his head that since the King, her protector, was laid aside, he might on some pretext or other divorce the Princess of Wales and marry again. By such a marriage he

might be rid of his detested wife, and (if the gods gave him a son) of his rebellious daughter. It has been said that this was one of his reasons for separating from Mrs. Fitzherbert, as the question of his marriage with her might have been raised again, and so interfered with his plans. But that marriage had proved no obstacle in his way when he had espoused the Princess of Wales, and he was hardly likely to consider it seriously, now when he wished to get rid of her. But the Princess, supported by her daughter, and with popular sympathy on her side, was not so easily got rid of.

There is no need to enter here into the details of the struggle which followed. For five years the Regent was engaged in ceaseless disputes with the Princess of Wales and his daughter, and the scandal of these quarrels brought him ever-increasing unpopularity. In August 1815 the Princess of Wales, worn-out by the long strife, committed the fatal mistake of leaving the country. Soon after her departure a reconciliation was patched up between the Regent and the Princess Charlotte, and in the following year (1816) she was happily married to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Unfortunately, their happiness did not last long; on November 6, 1817, the Princess Charlotte died in childbed, after giving birth to a still-born child, to the overwhelming grief of the nation. Just a year later (November 1818), Queen Charlotte died. Her death attracted scarcely more than passing notice, and she was little mourned by her children, and not at all by the public.

Through all these vicissitudes in the royal

family, Mrs. Fitzherbert had no communication with the Regent. She lived in retirement, and the years of her life, coincident with the Regency, yield less information than any others. Since this period of her life was uneventful, let us hope that it was happy. She adopted the same line of conduct she had pursued at the time of her previous separation. She went on with her ordinary life just as though nothing had happened, whatever her sufferings were in private, and maintained a smiling face to the world; no word of reproach against the Regent crossed her lips, and if ever she mentioned him to her friends, it was with respect. The Regent no longer went to her house, nor did she appear at his parties; but as this state of affairs had been going on more or less for two years, it excited little comment. So, for some time after the separation was an accomplished fact, people in general had no idea that it had taken place. An amusing instance of this occurred at Cheltenham, where Mrs. Fitzherbert went in 1812 to drink the waters. A public entertainment was given in honour of the Princess Charlotte's birthday, to which she was invited, and went in duty bound. The *gauche* colonel who acted as master of ceremonies led her in to supper before all the other ladies present; he later made a speech in which he alluded to her as "the Regentess," and in order to make things pleasant all round, he proceeded to praise the Regent, his consort the Princess of Wales, and the Princess Charlotte, whom he described as "the lovely fruit of their union." Mrs. Fitzherbert sat through it all with smiling composure.

Mrs. Fitzherbert during these years found great happiness in the training and education of her adopted daughter, Miss Seymour, and in the affection which existed between them. The guardianship of her ward was assured to her by the Regent by the terms of their separation, and Mrs. Fitzherbert had no longer to fear any opposition from the Seymour family. So amiable and conciliatory had been her conduct towards them, that they were now quite reconciled, even those who were at first most opposed. Miss Seymour's elder brother, George, was one of these. He writes, "In my early life I was so much at sea that I seldom saw Mrs. Fitzherbert, but when on shore I had always occasion to admire the maternal kindness with which she treated my sister; it was exemplary, and she endeavoured to do what she considered my parents would have deemed of greatest importance, which was allowing Protestant instructors to visit my sister regularly, and avoiding any effort to induce her to become a Catholic. As years drew on, my former objection to her home being with Mrs. Fitzherbert weakened, when I saw how consistently her kindness to my sister was administered; her house was always open to my brothers and myself, and she always consulted me about my sister's welfare."[1] Miss Seymour well repaid the love which Mrs. Fitzherbert lavished on her. She returned her affection, and cheered the loneliness

[1] *Admiral Sir George Seymour, G.C.B.* This quotation was made from a memorandum written by Sir George Seymour at Lady Georgina Bathurst's request. I am permitted to quote from it by members of the family.

of her life She grew up a most attractive and striking girl full of grace, wit, and natural *gaieté de cœur* She possessed in a marked degree that indefinable quality called charm, which attracted all people to her The Countess Grey, writing to her daughter, Lady Georgiana Grey, thus spoke of Miss Seymour "I always find it impossible to leave her, I do not know what charm she possesses, I have seen cleverer people, and yet to me she is more captivating than they are It seems to me that being agreeable is a gift from Heaven which is not to be attained, and happy are those who possess it."

For six years, until 1817, the year Miss Seymour came out, the greater part of Mrs Fitzherbert's life was passed in retirement Soon after her separation from the Regent, she bought a villa on the Thames, with a large garden, Sherwood Lodge, Battersea—a district very different then to what it is now—and there much of her time was spent Both she and Miss Seymour delighted in the garden, and found in it an interest and an occupation[1] At Sherwood Lodge Mrs Fitzherbert gave garden parties during the summer, and entertained her friends Among her guests was the Prince of Holstein who wrote to her of "ce temps gai que j'ai si souvent passé dans votre maison" The royal dukes often visited her at Sherwood Lodge, especially the Duke of York, who had helped her to choose this place of retreat He

[1] "Mrs. Fitzherbert (says the *Morning Post*) is one of the most scientific botanists in the kingdom, and her *protégée*, Miss [illegible] is not deficient in that way"—*The Brighton Gazette*, [illegible] 18[illegible]4

wrote her in reply to her congratulations on his birthday:—

H.R.H. the Duke of York to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"BRIGHTON, *August* 20, 1812.

"Accept my best thanks, my dear Friend, for your very kind letter, which only reached me yesterday, as well as all you are so good as to say to me on the anniversary of my birthday. Be assured that I am fully sensible of this fresh proof of the steady friendship which you have upon all occasions evinced for me for so many years. You know that there is no one more sincerely attached to you, or feels a more lively interest in everything concerning you, than I do. I am rejoiced to learn that you are so well pleased with, and feel yourself so comfortable at, Sherwood Lodge; from what I could judge of the place, when I saw it with you, I am certain it was capable of being made very pretty, and I shall be very anxious as soon as I return to town to see all your improvements. Ever yours most affectionately,

"FREDERICK."

The Duke of Kent, who was at this time living abroad, did not forget his old friend in his voluntary exile, as the following letter will show:—

H.R.H. the Duke of Kent to Mrs. Fitzherbert, Sherwood Lodge, Battersea.

"BRUSSELS, *Friday, December* 20, 1816.

"MY EVER DEAREST MRS. FITZHERBERT,—It is now four months since I left England, and rather

more than that since I took my leave of *you*. During the first half of that time I have been a great traveller, and little able to write to any one; and during the two last months I have been so taken up with the necessary details to make myself comfortable, that I have been only just able to reply to those of my correspondents who have written to me here—amongst the number of whom it would have been a very great comfort, from all the attachment and affection I bear you, had I found that *you* too had thought of me. . . .

"I shall now give you a hasty sketch of my proceedings since I left you, and commence by saying that I left dear Castle Hill at 3 o'clock on the 19th of August. . . . I was detained here (in Brussels) till the 12th September last most unfortunately, owing to the non-arrival of my servants, equipage, and baggage, but it was well I stayed, for after I turned my back very little was done to this old mansion I occupy, until my return—all the workmen being called off to prepare for the court, who were to arrive about the third week in October. On the 12th September, however, I set out accompanied by Lieut.-Colonel Müller of my regiment, in my travelling baroutsch, with my valet, and one footman on the box and another in the corner, and passing through Liege, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Coblentz, and Mayence, I reached Frankfort on the 15th. There I stayed three days on account of meeting my old uncle, the *then* reigning Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (since dead), and went in company with him to visit the Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg, whose eldest son was an old German

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[illegible] of mine. There I saw a foolish young woman, a Princess of Anhalt-Dessau, grand-daughter of the old people, who is talked of as my brother Adolphus' future bride, but perhaps with as little foundation as that odious Princess Amelia of Baden, whom I find the papers have thought fit to give to one!

"From Frankfort I went to Darmstadt, where I passed an evening with my old acquaintances the Grand-Duke and Duchess (formerly a celebrated beauty), by whom I was most hospitably received. The next day I went to Carlsruhe, where I saw the [illegible] I was called to (Princess Amelia), who is sister of the Queen of Bavaria, sister of the Empress of Russia, of the ex-Queen of Sweden, of the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt, and of the deceased Duchess of Brunswick. But from her being the only one of the six sisters left on hand at the age of *forty-one*, and the eldest too, you may judge how little *desirable* she is. I must, however, say that I was most hospitably and magnificently entertained by the Landgravine, her mother, and was compensated for the *ennui* of her company by becoming acquainted with that most lively, fascinating little creature, Stephanie Beauharnais, now Grand Duchess of Baden, her sister-in-law.

"On the night of the 21st I left Carlsruhe, after a *séjour* there not exceeding thirty hours, and reached Stuttgard to breakfast on the 22nd. There you will easily imagine the pleasure my sister[1] and myself experienced after a separation of more than

[1] Charlotte, Queen of Würtemberg, eldest daughter of George III.

one-and-thirty years. I remained *with her* till th 3rd of October, I *may* say *comblé de politesses d'attentions* from her husband, and with many proof of affection from herself.

"I had then intended going by way of Strasbur and Luxemburg straight to Cambray, the origina intention of the Duke of Wellington having been t hold his grand review on the 11th or 12th; but th lateness of the harvest obliging him to postpone till the 21st, I found I had just time to run over t Paris. . . . And so proceeding first to Würzbur to pay a visit to the Prince Royal of Bavaria, wh married a cousin of ours, a very sweet woman, pushed on by the route of Mannheim, Metz, an Verdun to Paris, which I reached on the 8th c October. The only incident that I met with wort noticing at Würzburg was my becoming acquainte there with the Empress of Austria, one of th plainest, yet one of the most pleasing, mannerl women, I have ever met with. . . .

"I was most kindly received (in Paris) by all th royal family. I had two audiences of the King and dined with him once. I also dined once wit the Dutchess-Dowager of Orleans, once with th English ambassador, and once with the Hanoveria Minister—all the other days at home. My evening I generally went to the theatre in a private bo and the morning I devoted to seeing those objec that I considered most deserving of attentio accompanied by ——, a very intelligent young ma I had thus the good fortune to be able to inspe everything with great comfort, being perfectly *inco* except at Versailles, St. Cloud and Les Invalide

where I was, of course, obliged to appear with some one from the court to attend me. In short, the day was never long enough for all I had to do, and I left a great deal to see for another time.

"I left Paris on the 19th for Cambray, taking on my way Chantilly and Compiègne. At the former place I saw the old Prince of Condé, much broke, yet apparently happy and resigned; notwithstanding the dreadful state of the weather and the ground, on the morning of the 23rd at 6 o'clock we separated, he being bound for Paris and I to Brussels. Here I have remained ever since, except going once, on November 2nd, to take my Birthday dinner with the officers of my own Corps *at their request*, and upon which occasion the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hill came over from Cambray to meet me. . . . The court was already arrived here on my return from my journey. I was received by the King, Queen, Prince of Orange and his young wife, and Prince Frederick his brother, with every possible mark of politeness and good-humour. I am asked to dine, or sup, with them whenever they have any public party, but this is rare, as the court live uncommonly retired by choice, perhaps more so than is good for the sake of establishing a degree of popularity in the new capital. Otherwise I accept no invitations, as there is such a mixture of company of all countries and politics in this place, that it would be quite impossible to discriminate; and I only invite occasionally four, but oftener two, friends to dinner, to have my rubber of whist at what evenings we don't go to the theatre, where, by-the-bye, the performance is very passable. . . .

"I continue to be an early riser, but not so early as I was at home, for I now rise at ½ past 6, or ¼ before 7, instead of at 5 as I used to do, and I am seldom out of bed after 11, the theatre rarely being over later than 10, and all parties, except amongst *our* countrymen, breaking up about the same hour Thus you see I am living most quietly, and I trust contentedly, in the full spirit of my plan of economy and retrenchment My house though old thanks to painting, papering, whitewashing, carpeting, and putting up a number of stoves is very tolerably comfortable totally *isolé* from any other, not overlooked, and with a fine flower garden and small shrubbery, a good deal of fruit on the wall and on standards, and I have the advantage of having all my horses, equipages, and stablemen within my own yard

"I had intended running over to England for about three weeks at the end of October, or beginning of November but now I look forward to the *probability*, though not to the *certainty*, of paying you a visit in the spring But whether I do so or not (after my presuming to bore you with so long a letter about *myself*, which nothing could warrant my doing but my confidence in your regard for me) do not doubt the sincerity of that lasting and warm attachment, with which I am my dearest Mrs Fitzherbert, ever your most faithful, devoted and affectionate

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where I was, of course, obliged to appear with some one from the court to attend me. In short, the day was never long enough for all I had to do, and I left a great deal to see for another time.

"I left Paris on the 19th for Cambray, taking on my way Chantilly and Compiègne. At the former place I saw the old Prince of Condé, much broke, yet apparently happy and resigned; notwithstanding the dreadful state of the weather and the ground, on the morning of the 23rd at 6 o'clock we separated, he being bound for Paris and I to Brussels. Here I have remained ever since, except going once, on November 2nd, to take my Birthday dinner with the officers of my own Corps *at their request*, and upon which occasion the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hill came over from Cambray to meet me. . . . The court was already arrived here on my return from my journey. I was received by the King, Queen, Prince of Orange and his young wife, and Prince Frederick his brother, with every possible mark of politeness and good-humour. I am asked to dine, or sup, with them whenever they have any public party, but this is rare, as the court live uncommonly retired by choice, perhaps more so than is good for the sake of establishing a degree of popularity in the new capital. Otherwise I accept no invitations, as there is such a mixture of company of all countries and politics in this place, that it would be quite impossible to discriminate; and I only invite occasionally four, but oftener two, friends to dinner, to have my rubber of whist at what evenings we don't go to the theatre, where, by-the-bye, the performance is very passable. . . .

"I continue to be an early riser, but not so early as I was at home, for I now rise at ½ past 6, or ¼ before 7, instead of at 5 as I used to do; and I am seldom out of bed after 11, the theatre rarely being over later than 10, and all parties, except amongst *our* countrymen, breaking up about the same hour. Thus you see I am living most quietly, and I trust contentedly, in the full spirit of my plan of economy and retrenchment. My house, though old, thanks to painting, papering, whitewashing, carpeting, and putting up a number of stoves, is very tolerably comfortable, totally *isolé* from any other, not overlooked, and with a fine flower garden and small shrubbery, a good deal of fruit on the wall and on standards, and I have the advantage of having all my horses, equipages, and stablemen within my own yard.

"I had intended running over to England for about three weeks at the end of October, or beginning of November . . . but now I look forward to the *probability*, though not to the *certainty*, of paying you a visit in the spring. But whether I do so or not (after my presuming to bore you with so long a letter about *myself*, which nothing could warrant my doing but my confidence in your regard for me) do not doubt the sincerity of that lasting and warm attachment, with which I am, my dearest Mrs. Fitzherbert, ever your most faithful, devoted, and affectionate

"EDWARD."

Though Mrs. Fitzherbert made Sherwood Lodge her summer residence during these years, she was

also sometimes in London and often at Brighton. It was for the sake of Miss Seymour that she still kept in touch with the world instead of retiring from it altogether (as her own inclinations tempted her to do), so that she might the better introduce her ward into the society worthy of her birth. The effort cost her much, but she was then, as always, supported by her friends; her social position had gained rather than lost by her separation from the Regent—at least among those of her friends who were worth having. We get glimpses of her during this period in contemporary memoirs and letters. We find her in 1813 at a party given by Lord Clifford in honour of the Duke of Sussex, who was the royal duke who expressed himself strongly in favour of Emancipation. All the Roman Catholic *élite* were there, yet even among them the precise state of Mrs. Fitzherbert's relations with the Regent was not known. "Some say," writes Lady Jerningham, "that the Prince does not see her any more, others that he divides his favours equally."[1] Again, the Dowager Lady Verulam writes to Mary Frampton (July 2, 1814): "We met yesterday *the* Mrs. Fitzherbert and her *protegée;* she was driving herself in one of the fashionable carriages; they have four wheels and one horse and go at a great rate. One could not help moralising, as the road she was on was the very one on which the Princess of Wales was driven almost every day in her phaeton."[2] We find Mrs. Fitzherbert in 1814, the same week that

[1] "The Jerningham Letters," *op. cit.*
[2] "The Journal of Mary Frampton," *op. cit.*

the Princess of Wales left England, leaving Brighton for Paris with Miss Seymour, doubtless to avoid the Regent who was coming to Brighton to entertain his mother Queen Charlotte on his birthday Though she avoided him as much as possible, an occasional meeting was unavoidable For instance, in 1815 about a fortnight before the Battle of Waterloo they met in London at a ball given by the Countess of Ailesbury The Regent arrived about one o'clock, and remained for an hour He saw Mrs Fitzherbert, but he took not the slightest notice of her, and we are told that she was ' dreadfully overcome On the other hand, a year or two later, Sir Henry Holland tells us, " I witnessed once, when meeting the Prince Regent and Mrs Fitzherbert in the same room at Bridgewater House, that rejection of every intercourse on *her* part which gave origin to so many anecdotes true or false, on the subject [1] Mrs Damer (*née* Seymour) in after years related to one of her daughters that one evening at a great party in London—I believe at Devonshire House—she and Mrs Fitzherbert were going up the stairs, and met the Regent face to face coming down He stopped to speak to Miss Seymour with his usual kindness but Mrs Fitzherbert passed on as though regardless of his presence, neither did she show any sign of agitation From this it would seem that if the Regent would not speak to Mrs Fitzherbert neither would she speak to him Probably they had tacitly agreed to ignore one another

[1] Sir Henry Holland's "Memoirs."

The Regent's resentment against Mrs. Fitzherbert (if he cherished any) did not extend to Miss Seymour, whom he always treated with kindness. Sir George Seymour writes, "During the two years" (after the Seymour case), "the Prince continued to be much at Mrs. Fitzherbert's; his fondness towards Mary was continually shown—afterwards he rarely saw her. He usually sent her a small birthday present, and on the day when she attained her twenty-first year he addressed a note to her to say that when she was very young he had put by £10,000 for her, and was happy to find the interest had increased to make it nearly £20,000. He therefore enclosed a draft on Messrs. Coutts in her favour for that sum. This was generous on the part of His Royal Highness, and unexpected, as when his offer to settle that sum on her, on condition that the guardians left her with Mrs. Fitzherbert, was refused, the offer was supposed to have dropped with the refusal."[1]

The Regent went comparatively seldom to Brighton at this period, and Mrs. Fitzherbert frequently. After Miss Seymour came out, he always invited her to the parties he gave at the Pavilion, if she were at Brighton, and Mrs. Fitzherbert wished her to go, though she herself no longer went there. For instance, we find Miss Seymour at the Pavilion on January 7, 1817, the last birthday of the Princess Charlotte. "The ball," we read, "was opened by the Duke of Clarence and Lady Cholmondeley, Prince Esterhazy and the Hon. Miss Seymour [she is always thus styled in the local papers], to

[1] Memorandum of Admiral Sir George Seymour, G.C.B.

the lively tones of stringed instruments and the tambour, and kept up with unflagging spirit, with interval for supper, until nearly six A.M." The following week the Grand-Duke Nicholas of Russia, afterwards the Emperor Nicholas I., arrived at the Pavilion on a visit to the Regent, and splendid entertainments were given in his honour. Again we read: "The Grand-Duke's partner during the ball was generally the Hon. Miss Seymour, ward of Mrs. Fitzherbert." Mrs. Fitzherbert also gave a dance at Brighton, at which "a select circle of fashionables were present."

This year (1817) Mrs. Fitzherbert and Miss Seymour went to Paris[1] for some time. In Paris Mrs. Fitzherbert was well received by the French royal family, who treated her with great respect. They regarded her as the morganatic wife of the Regent; Roman Catholics themselves, they knew that most of her troubles had arisen from her steadfastness to her religion, and they honoured her accordingly. Also, when the Orleanist Princes were in England, Mrs. Fitzherbert saw a good deal of them, and entertained them with her usual hospitality. Louis Philippe wrote to her shortly before his return to France a letter in which he said, "I thank you with all my heart for your past, present, and *future* kindness to me, for which I am very grateful,"[2] and

[1] "The French papers say, '*Madame Fitzherbert* [illegible], known in England for her [illegible] where she intends to [illegible] for some [illegible]'" October 4, 1817

[2] Letter of Louis Philippe to Mrs. Fitzherbert [illegible] July 18, 1815, signed "Yours [illegible]"

when she came to Paris he did his best to repay that kindness.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was back in Brighton for Christmas and for the New Year (1818). The Regent was also there, but he was ill, and in low spirits, and all the gaieties of the Pavilion were suspended on account of the court mourning. But he superintended the decorations of his banqueting room and the music room; his passion for pulling his house about continued unabated. Croker, who was visiting Brighton at this time, seems to have thought that the secluded life led there by the Regent was due to the presence of Mrs. Fitzherbert. He makes the following ill-informed remarks in his Journal: "I cannot but wonder at her (Mrs. Fitzherbert) living here and bearding the Prince in a way so indelicate, *vis-à-vis* the public, and, I should have thought, so embarrassing to herself. To her presence is attributed the Prince's never going abroad at Brighton. I have known H.R.H. here seven or eight years, and never saw or heard of his being on foot out of the limits of the Pavilion, and in general he avoids even riding through the principal streets. I cannot see how poor old Mrs. Fitzherbert . . . can cause him any uneasiness."[1]

That the Regent had no feeling on the subject, is shown by his asking Miss Seymour to the Pavilion. The habit of retirement was growing on him, and was to lead before long to an almost oriental habit

[1] "The Croker Papers: The Correspondence and Diaries of the Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, &c." Edited by Louis J. Jennings, 1884.

of seclusion, not only in Brighton, but also in London and at Windsor. Croker also writes in his Journal a day or two later: "One reason why Mrs. Fitzherbert may like this place is that she is treated as queen at least of Brighton. They don't quite *Highness* her in her domestic circle, but they *Madam* her prodigiously, and stand up longer for her arrival than for ordinary folks, and in short go as near to acknowledging her for *princess* as they can without actually giving her the title. When she dines out she expects to be led out to dinner before peeresses—mighty foolish all this. The Duke of York still keeps up a correspondence with her, for Seymour mentioned she had had a letter from his Royal Highness this morning. I suspect the Prince would not be much pleased if he knew this."[1]

Croker exaggerated, but Mrs. [illegible] undoubtedly treated with peculiar [illegible] friends, not only at Brighton [illegible] the only way they could [illegible] and mark their disapproval [illegible] ment of her, for no [illegible] crossed her lips

The death of the [illegible] a great difference [illegible] brothers. The Duke of [illegible] great friend had [illegible] the throne. He [illegible] and the Duke of [illegible] were unmarried [illegible] married the [illegible]

[illegible]

had contracted a "left-handed" marriage. As it was thought necessary to provide for the succession, the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, and Cambridge made haste to be wed. The necessary princesses (German, of course) were found; and within the year that followed the death of the Princess Charlotte, the three Royal Dukes were duly espoused. The Duke of Clarence married Adelaide, Princess of Saxe-Coburg-Meiningen, the Duke of Kent married Victoria Mary Louisa, daughter of the Prince of Saxe-Saalfeld-Coburg, and widow of Charles Louis, Prince of Leiningen, and the Duke of Cambridge married Augusta, daughter of Frederick of Hesse-Cassel.

The Duke of Kent's marriage made no difference to the feelings of friendship that he entertained for Mrs. Fitzherbert, for we find him writing again a few weeks after it had taken place:—

H.R.H. the Duke of Kent to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"KENSINGTON PALACE, ½ *past* 2 *o'clock*,
Tuesday afternoon, *August* 25, 1818.

"MY EVER DEAREST MRS. FITZHERBERT,—Having at length the prospect of being able (if you will admit me towards 7 or 8 o'clock this evening) to spend half-an-hour with you, perhaps the only moment I may have (as in fact it has been hitherto) before I leave England, I send this over by a messenger to say that I will take my chance and call at your door, at all events. In the meantime, pray do me the justice to believe that you have *never been out of my thoughts*, and that nothing



GEORGE IV AT THE TIME HE ASCENDED THE THRONE

George R.

but the situation I have been placed in for the last seven weeks, could have made me either abstain from writing, or calling, until now Neither time nor situation can alter the warmth and sincerity of my attachment for you

"Remember me kindly to dear Miss Seymour, and accept the assurance of all that unalterable, lively, and friendly regard, with which I shall remain to the latest hour of my existence, my ever dearest Mrs Fitzherbert, your most affectionate and devoted

"EDWARD"

Mrs Fitzherbert saw the Duke of Kent, it was the last time they met

Shortly after this the Duke went abroad, but he returned to England the following spring, in order that his child might be born in England The Princess Victoria was born on May 24, 1819 at Kensington Palace The amiable Prince, her father, died on January 23, 1820, when the Princess Victoria was only eight months old The Duke of Kent's death was followed six days later by one of greater importance in the royal family The old King George III died at midnight on January 29, 1820, and the Regent ascended the throne as George IV.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRIAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE

(1820–1821)

THE accession of George IV. brought little change to him except a change of title, for all the essential attributes of kingship had been his during the Regency. It brought, however, an addition of income (though not sufficient for his needs) and some increase of prerogative. As King he was able to indulge more freely in the pageantry so dear to his heart. Vested in purple and gold he opened Parliament, seated on a new throne.

One of the King's first acts was to try to get rid of his Queen. The unfortunate Caroline had been living abroad since 1814; her erratic conduct had given occasion for scandal, and after the death of her daughter she seems to have become reckless. She played into the hands of her enemies. George IV. had long cherished a plan for divorcing her, and when death removed the Princess Charlotte, her only true friend and protectress, he lost no time in putting it into motion. He appointed a secret committee to watch Caroline's conduct abroad, and collect evidence against her; she was pursued by spies and subjected to insult. When the King came to the throne the British ambassadors and ministers at foreign courts were instructed not to recognise her

as Queen Consort, and her name was left out of the Liturgy. These tactics, coupled with a rumour that action was to be taken against her, determined the Queen to return to England and meet her accusers face to face. This, of all things, the British Government was anxious to prevent. Ministers had already advised the King not to attempt to divorce his Queen; they now tried to bribe her with an offer of £50,000 per annum to stay abroad and forego the title and prerogatives of Queen-Consort; and they threatened her with criminal proceedings if she returned to England. The bribe was never satisfactorily explained to the Queen; her advocate Brougham seems to have played in this matter a double part, and her answer to the threats of the King and the Government was to defy them and to set out for England at once. Thus would an innocent woman have acted, conscious of her innocence. The intrepid Queen landed at Dover on June 6, 1820; she was welcomed with a royal salute thundered out from the Castle, the commandant having had no instructions to the contrary; the whole population of the town turned out to greet her; she was received with frantic cheers and acclamations of delight. When she set out for London that same evening, a crowd followed her; the horses were taken out of her coach, and the people drew her for some distance out of the town. Her journey from Dover to London was a royal progress. At Canterbury she was met by a torchlight procession, tumultuous applause, and an address of welcome; she lay there the night, and next morning proceeded on her way. As she drew near London a vast

cavalcade came out to meet her; the road was lined with tens of thousands, who shouted themselves hoarse, and when she passed over Westminster Bridge the cheers of the multitude sounded inside the walls of Parliament like the roaring of the sea, and warned the King's Ministers of the dangers and difficulties of the course on which they had entered. The Queen's popularity was overwhelming; the masses of the people were on her side; they considered her to be a persecuted woman, the victim of a base plot against her honour and perhaps her life. The mob, who cheered her whithersoever she went, did not care greatly whether she were innocent or guilty; they admired her courage, they were indignant at her wrongs, and they detested her persecutor.

The day after the Queen's arrival in London, the *portentous "green bag," supposed to* be filled with evidence against the Queen, was carried down to Parliament. The question whether it should be opened or not formed the subject of impassioned debate. The King invited the House of Lords "to give serious attention to the charges against his consort." The Queen sent a message to the House of Commons protesting against the evidence of the hired spies and secret agents, who had sought to destroy her honour and peace abroad. She declared that she had returned to England to confront her persecutors; she denounced all attempt at secrecy, and demanded an open trial. Frightened by her intrepid demeanour and the popular ferment, attempts were again made by the Ministers to arrange matters with the Queen, and the following

offer was submitted to her:—She was to have an income of £50,000 a year, an "official announcement of her position" was to be given to foreign courts, and addresses were to be presented to her from both Houses of Parliament. On her part she was to leave England as soon as possible in a King's ship and to reside abroad; her name was not to appear in the Liturgy. Had these terms been offered to the Queen while she was still abroad she would have no doubt accepted them, but her overwhelming popularity in England had turned her head. Four delegates from the House of Commons waited on her at Lady Anne Hamilton's house in Portman Square, where she was staying, with these offers. She received the deputation "sternly and haughtily," insisted on her full rights as Queen-Consort, and rejected all compromise. When it was known to the crowd outside that she had refused, their shouts might have been heard at Charing Cross. The popular enthusiasm of the multitude was greater than before, even the army began to shout "The Queen for ever!" As Luttrell wittily said, 'the extinguisher was taking fire.'

The Queen's refusal was made on the [illegible]. As she would accept no compromise, the [illegible] having gone so far, had no [illegible] but to go [illegible]. They could not withdraw from the [illegible] had taken up. Accordingly, the [illegible] opened and its contents [illegible] mentary committee. [illegible] the 4th July, and the 'Bill of [illegible]' was introduced by Lord [illegible]

Minister, in the House of Lords on the following day. This Bill was to deprive the Queen of her rights and privileges as Queen-Consort, and to dissolve the marriage between her and George IV. on the ground of her adultery. The first reading passed as a matter of form, the Queen protesting by counsel; the second reading was fixed for August 17.

The Queen moved to Brandenburg House, Hammersmith, and there waited the opening of the trial. She did not pass the interval in quiet retirement, but daily received deputations and addresses from all sorts and conditions of men and women; she heartily welcomed these signs that the people were on her side, and professed herself undaunted. But it must have been an anxious time with her; it was scarcely less anxious for the King.

There was also a third person who was only a degree less concerned in this trial than the principals — Mrs. Fitzherbert. In November, 1819, Mrs. Fitzherbert, accompanied by Miss Seymour, had gone to Paris for a stay of some months, intending to return to England in the spring. Tom Moore in his Diary mentions meeting her at a party in Paris on Christmas Day, 1819. "Mrs. Fitzherbert too, who I thought had cut me, gave me a very kind greeting."[1] He met her again, March 10, 1820, at Madamede Flahaut's, who was an Englishwoman, and had married the former French ambassador in England, and was now one of the most

[1] "Memoirs, Journals, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore." Edited by Lord John Russell, 1853.

popular hostesses in Paris.[1] The news of the old King's death, and of George IV.'s accession, reached Mrs. Fitzherbert in Paris. The event made little difference to her, for the King continued to her the same income he had guaranteed to her when Regent, and their relations towards one another had long since crystallised into an amicable separation. But Mrs. Fitzherbert knew that, with a character as vacillating as George IV.'s, one could never be sure what developments might arise, and she was preparing to return to England when the news reached her that the King intended to divorce his Queen. Mrs. Fitzherbert knew, none better, the hatred with which the King regarded his consort, but knowing also all the circumstances of the case, she could at first hardly believe that he would be so foolish as to take a step which would inevitably bring down upon his head an avalanche of abuse and recrimination, and force open the door for an investigation into his own past life. With that past life, for good or for evil, Mrs. Fitzherbert was identified, and though she had all to gain and nothing to lose by the true facts of her connection with the King becoming known, she was too magnanimous to desire a vindication at the expense of the King's dishonour and mortification.

Like many another, Mrs. Fitzherbert hoped that a compromise would be arrived at between the King and Queen. All doubts on the subject were, however, dispelled by the return of the Queen, the uproar and confusion that followed, and the intro-

[1] Comtesse de Flahaut, *née* Margaret Mercer Elphinstone, afterwards Baroness Keith and Nairn, was a great heiress; died 1867.

duction of the "Bill of Pains and Penalties." This turn of events determined Mrs. Fitzherbert to stay in Paris. She remembered the abuse showered on her innocent head at the time of "the delicate investigation," and though now she was wholly separated from the King, she deemed it wiser to stay away until the trial should be over. There was another and graver reason. Queen Caroline's friends were not slow to carry the war into the enemy's quarter, and they threatened, in the event of the proceedings turning against the Queen, to rake up the whole of the King's past life, not his *amours* merely (he would have cared very little about them), but to revive the question of his secret marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert. Queen Caroline was credited with saying, with characteristic coarseness, when she learned the charges against her, "Well, I have only committed adultery with one man, and he was Mrs. Fitzherbert's husband." Whether she really said this or not, the *mot* was repeated far and wide, and it was whispered that the secret marriage was to be one of the planks in the Queen's defence. If the question were raised, witnesses would have to be subpœnaed, documents impounded, the whole miserable business of thirty-five years ago raked up again, and Mrs. Fitzherbert pictured herself, at the age of sixty-four, dragged before the tribunal of the House of Lords and threatened with the mysterious penalties of *premunire*. It is no wonder that she elected to stay on the other side of the Channel, with certain documents that she always carried about with her safe in her possession, until the danger was passed. In speaking of this pos-

sibility years after, she said that "such an ordeal would have broken her heart." Fortunately she was not called upon to face it, for matters were not pushed to such a crisis.

On August 17, 1820, the trial of Queen Caroline began before the House of Lords. The Queen attended in person, and was present on every day of the trial; her progress to and from the House of Lords being the occasion of popular demonstrations. There is no need to recall here the dramatic incidents of the great trial—the Queen's intrepid bearing, the wild enthusiasm of the populace, the miserable character of the witnesses, the base and partial nature of their evidence, and the eloquence of her counsel. Neither need we raise the vexed question of her guilt or innocence. Innocent or guilty, she was a cruelly ill-used woman, and the man who dragged her to the judgment-seat should have been the last person in the world to accuse her, since much that she had done wrong, was in consequence of his ill-treatment. By September [illegible] the case for the Crown had concluded, and the House adjourned until October 3, to give time for the Queen's defence to be prepared. Thus there was [illegible] of suspense and inaction.

On October 3, the House of Lords [illegible] The Queen was in her place [illegible] worn, but undaunted. [illegible] served by counsel. [illegible] woman sitting there, [illegible] her parents dead, [illegible] herself aged and [illegible]

behalf. As Denman, one of the Queen's counsel, finely said, *àpropos* of the omission of her name from the Liturgy, that the omission was an insult, but before the throne of God it would make no difference, "since she was already prayed for under the heading of 'all who are desolate and oppressed.'"

In Brougham's great speech for the defence, he made a pointed allusion to the King's marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert. He said he hoped that he could establish the Queen's innocence without having recourse to recrimination, or uttering "one whisper, whether by way of attack, or by way of insinuation, against the conduct of her illustrious husband;" therefore, for the present, he should waive the right that he possessed, and abstain from the use of materials which were his; but he threatened that if he were disappointed in his expectation that the case against the Queen would break down of itself, he would not shrink from the fearless discharge of his sacred duty to protect his client "at all hazards, and against all others," and in the discharge of that duty he, as her advocate, would not "regard the alarm, the suffering, the torment, the destruction, which he might bring upon any others. Nay, separating even the duties of a patriot from those of an advocate, and casting them, if need be, to the wind, he must go on reckless of the consequences, if his fate it should unhappily be *to involve his country in confusion*." By this allusion, Brougham threatened, if the Queen were not acquitted, to raise the whole question of the King's previous marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert. In his "Memoirs," Brougham has made this clear. He writes:—



QUEEN CAROLINE, CONSORT OF GEORGE IV

"Independent of our support from the people, and even upon the supposition of the case appearing against us, I had a sure resource—a course that could not have failed, even if the Bill had actually passed the Lords. The threat which I held out in opening the defence was supposed to mean recrimination; and no doubt it included that. We had abundant evidence of the most unexceptionable kind, which would have proved a strong case against the King—indeed, an unquestionable one of that description; but we never could be certain of this proving decisive with both Houses, and it assuredly never would have been sufficient to make the King give up the Bill. . . . When I said that it might be my painful duty to bring forward what would involve the country in confusion, I was astonished that anybody should have conceived recrimination to be *all* I intended. . . . It was of the last importance that the real ground of the defence should be brought forward by surprise, or at all events that it should be presented at once in its full proportions, and by a short and clear statement. The ground, then, was neither more nor less than impeaching the King's own title, by proving that he had forfeited the crown. He had married a Roman Catholic (Mrs. Fitzherbert) while heir-apparent, and this is declared by the Act of Settlement to be a forfeiture of the Crown '*as though he were naturally dead.*' We were not in possession of all the circumstances as I have since ascertained them, but we had enough to prove the fact. Mrs. Fitzherbert's uncle, Mr. Errington, who was present at the marriage—indeed it was performed

in his house[1]—was still alive, and though, no doubt, he would have had the right to refuse answering a question to which an affirmative reply exposed him to the pains and penalties of *premunire*, denounced against any person present at such marriage, it was almost certain that, on Mrs. Fitzherbert's behalf, he would have waived the protection, and given his testimony to prove the marriage; but even his refusal would have left the conviction in all men's minds that the marriage had taken place. However, there existed ample evidence, which Errington would undoubtedly have enabled us to produce, without the possibility of incurring any penalties whatever."[2]

But there was no occasion to proceed to such extreme measures. The torrent of Brougham's eloquence and logic in his opening speech was all-convincing. It soon became evident that it would not be necessary for him to launch his thunderbolt by raising the question of the King's secret marriage to a Roman Catholic. There was no need of recrimination against the King; there was no need even to call witnesses in the Queen's defence. The case against her broke down, and on the third reading of the Bill the majority in the House of Lords had sunk to nine. The Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, seeing the utter hopelessness of carrying the Bill through the House of Commons, and anxious to end the

[1] Not correct. The marriage was performed at Mrs. Fitzherbert's own house in Park Street.

[2] "Lord Brougham's Memoirs," vol. ii. pp. 405–8. Further quotations from the "Memoirs," touching the legal aspects of the case, have been given in a previous chapter on the validity of the marriage.

dangerous agitation without doors, stood up in his place in the House of Lords and announced, on behalf of the Government, the withdrawal of the Bill against the Queen. Such was the "acquittal of Queen Caroline." The Queen was present to hear the result; though shuddering with anxiety, she was courageous to the last. She wrote "Caroline Regina" across a document with a firm hand, and then, victorious and triumphant, went forth to meet her friends, the people, who had gathered, a countless host, outside the walls of Parliament. They received her with frenzied acclamations and generous exultation.

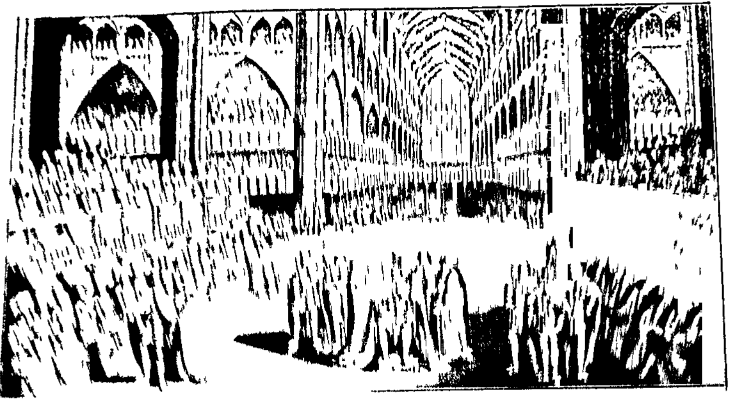
Thus passed the only chance of the truth of Mrs. Fitzherbert's marriage becoming known to the world in her day and generation. But her anxiety was so great that she did not realise this aspect of the case at the time. In her shelter in Paris she heard the result of the Queen's trial with great relief, and in the autumn of 1820, popular excitement having to some extent subsided, she returned to England.

We find her at Brighton as usual for Christmas and the New Year. At Brighton she emerged somewhat from her seclusion, for we read of her giving "a brilliant party, at which amateur theatricals were performed, Lord Normanby and Miss Seymour acting the leading parts."[1] George IV. also came to Brighton at the end of February for a month, but between Steine House and the Pavilion there was no communication. The King was ill with gout and disappointment at the result of the trial. He saw

[1] *Brighton Herald*, February 10, 1821.

few people, and entertained not at all. He was worried by endless petitions about his Queen, and, though he feigned indifference, he was almost driven crazy by the annoyance.

The King presently forgot his vexations in a new interest. He had resolved to be crowned, and he was determined, all untoward circumstances notwithstanding, that no coronation before or since should be so magnificent as his. The preparations for it engrossed all his energies through the spring and early summer of 1821. When Queen Caroline heard of it she insisted on being crowned likewise; the demand was refused, on the ground that the King's Consort was only crowned according to the King's pleasure. The coronation of George IV. took place at Westminster Abbey, with great state and splendour. There was only one circumstance which dimmed its lustre; the Queen, the refusal notwithstanding, was determined to be present at the ceremony. On the morning of the coronation she presented herself at the doors of the Abbey and endeavoured to force an entrance. She was refused admittance, and her nerve failing her at the last moment, she gave up the attempt and made her way back to Brandenburg House amid the jeers of the fickle mob. This mortification, added to the excitement she had already undergone, brought about an illness which proved fatal. She died at her house in South Audley Street on August 7, 1821, meeting her death with fortitude and blessing her enemies. Thus ended her troubled life, but even her funeral procession was attended with riots during its passage through London. Her



remains were conveyed to Brunswick, and buried there in the vault of her ancestors.

The King had embarked at Holyhead, bound for a visit to Ireland, when the news of the Queen's death reached him. He submitted to a few days' decent retirement, and then continued his voyage. The day he landed in Ireland, he declared to be "the happiest day of his life"—it was the day the ill-fated Caroline was buried at Brunswick.

Mrs. Fitzherbert spent the summer of 1821 at her villa at Battersea. She was not present at the coronation. On this occasion also the "two wives were left at home," though one of them had refused to stay there.

When the King returned from Ireland after the death of the unhappy Caroline, he told Mrs. Fitzherbert that he intended to marry again. Her answer was "Very well, Sir," and in this curt reply may be read the measure of her contempt. Lord Stourton, who is responsible for this statement, adds: "She ordered horses with a resolution to abandon the country, and was only prevented from doing so that day by the interposition of a common friend." The "common friend" was probably the Duke of York, and the King must have sent her the message through him, for there is no record that he ever exchanged a word with her after their separation in 1812. Very likely it was on this occasion that Mrs. Fitzherbert showed the Duke of York her marriage certificate, and made him realise for the first time how deeply the King's honour was pledged to her. The Duke, who was a true gentleman, respected her confidence, and forbore to take [illegible] of it.

He must have known what the King's marriage to a Roman Catholic meant to him, and his interests as heir-presumptive to the throne were against the King's marrying again. But perhaps he did not take either the past or the future marriage very seriously.

At the end of September the King set out on a visit to Hanover, and it was rumoured that while there he meant to seek a wife among the numerous Protestant princesses of Germany. But he returned to England without one. There was now an influence at home (far more potent than Mrs. Fitzherbert's or the Duke of York's) at work to prevent the King marrying again.

CHAPTER IX

THE LADY STEWARD

(1821–1825)

THOUGH the King had not succeeded in divorcing his Queen, he had been more successful in getting rid of Lady Hertford. Their separation took place about the time George IV. ascended the throne. Lady Hertford had long wearied him, and no doubt he had long wearied her; she was too reserved [illegible] dignified, too cold for his taste. The wonder is that her influence over him had lasted so long, for he was not a man who affected intellectual friendships with women. Moreover, she was growing old, and the King, who in his youth had [illegible] admired women older than himself, now [illegible] years preferred them younger. For [illegible] past he had been attracted by the [illegible] the Marchioness Conyngham,[1] [illegible] maturity of her beauty. Lady [illegible] and plump, with a [illegible] blue eyes and golden [illegible] much like what Mrs. [illegible] zenith. She was [illegible] of being intellectual [illegible] her enthusiasms [illegible]

[1] Elizabeth, daughter of [illegible] Baron and first Marquess [illegible]

for causes. She had a sweet smile and the gift of lively, animated conversation; she flattered the King and amused him—in short, she kept him in a good humour, and as he had enough worry and annoyance elsewhere, it would be hard to grudge him the pleasure he found in her society. George IV. created for her the post of "Lady Steward," which made her the mistress of his household. Lord Conyngham became Lord Chamberlain. Many wondered why Lady Conyngham accepted such a position—why she was allowed to accept it. She had a husband, a man of high rank and wealth; she had a grown-up daughter, "just out," a beautiful creature like her mother; she had a son, a handsome, high-spirited young man; she had, in short, almost everything a woman could wish—why should she imperil an assured position by becoming a King's favourite? If her eyes were blinded by vanity, Lord Conyngham's were not likely to be, for he was a man of sense and honour. We therefore take it that, as a contemporary writer says, "her husband was perfectly satisfied of the harmlessness of the intimacy"; and since he was satisfied, it was obviously not the business of any one else to cavil. Still, there are always people who put evil constructions on the most harmless friendships. Lady Conyngham's brother, Mr. Denison, was one of them; he remonstrated with his sister for accepting the appointment, and threatened to alter his will. Lady Conyngham, in tears of rage and defiance, protested her innocence, and justified everything she did by the precedent of Lady Hertford, whom she declared to be a model of decorum. Lady Hertford

was not so charitable, when some one asked her if the King had ever mentioned Lady Conyngham to her, she haughtily replied that, "intimately as she had known the King, and openly as he had always talked to her upon every subject he had never ventured to speak to her on that of his *mistresses*"[1] There was nothing to prove that Lady Conyngham deserved such a title, but this uncharitableness was perhaps due to something more than jealousy of a triumphant rival At the time of Queen Caroline's trial, the mob, always behind-hand in these matters, smashed Lady Hertford's windows, while Lady Conyngham's were left untouched By and by, when the people became aware of Lady Conyngham's existence, they applied to her the same epithet as Lady Hertford had done, and most of the writers of contemporary memoirs have endorsed it But it is quite probable that they were wrong The King lived alone, he was growing old, his health was failing His home was not a bright one—for this he had himself to thank His favourite sister, the Duchess of Gloucester, had her own interests and duties, and his unmarried sister, the Princess Augusta, suffered from ill-health, otherwise, she would have been the most fitting person to preside over his court The King liked female society, he liked to have a lady who would sit at his dinner table and reign over his household Mrs Fitzherbert had filled the position for many years by right, Lady Hertford had occupied it at the King's pleasure, and now it was filled by Lady Conyngham with the consent of

[1] Greville Memoirs."

her husband, who was Lord Chamberlain. Lady Conyngham was very decorative, no wonder the King liked to see her near him at dinner; she was very bright and amusing, no wonder he enjoyed her society; and for the rest—*honi soit qui mal y pense.*

The King was free to create a "Lady Steward" if he wished to do so; in that there was no reason for scandal. Nevertheless, he was unfortunate in his choice. Despite her rank, her beauty and vivacity, Lady Conyngham was a woman with a vulgar mind; she was self-seeking, and took a low view of human nature generally. It soon became apparent that her influence over the King was far worse than Lady Hertford's had ever been. She flattered him to the top of his bent, she affected to believe his preposterous delusions, she encouraged him in his prejudices, and his self-indulgent habits. Knowing how fickle he was, and fearful lest any alien influence should endanger her sway, she encouraged his growing tendency to seclusion until he became almost a hermit, rarely showing himself in public, scarcely going outside the grounds, and sometimes for days not quitting his palace. This was partly due to his vanity, for he had grown very corpulent, and he was intensely sensitive to ridicule. The King now took no walking exercise, and his indolence became a confirmed habit. If ambition had been Lady Hertford's ruling passion, avarice was Lady Conyngham's; she coveted everything she saw, and the infatuated King gave her everything she asked for, even to Crown jewels. She appeared at Devonshire

House with a sapphire on her head which had belonged to the Stuarts, a royal heirloom. The heir-presumptive to the throne, the Duke of York, was very indignant, but he did not dare remonstrate with his brother. Nor did the Lady Steward, or "The Lady," as she was generally called, confine her activities to the royal household, which she filled with her creatures; she interfered in every department of the State; she even nominated to bishoprics, of course through the King, and she plotted with the Duke of Cumberland against the King's Ministers. Such a woman was not likely to let power slip from her grasp. She bound the King with silken cords, so soft that he did not suspect their strength. She soon disabused the King of his idea of marrying again. Ill, and growing daily more indolent, George IV. was unable to resist her; the matter dropped, and Lady Conyngham took care that it should never be revived.

At the time of Lady Hertford's downfall, and again after Queen Caroline's death, there were rumours that the King and Mrs. Fitzherbert were going to be reconciled. These rumours were, of course, without foundation. Mrs. Fitzherbert made no attempt to meet the King at any point. She was sixty-five, and she declared that her only wish was to end her days in peace and quietness; these, she knew from experience, could not be found in royal palaces. Deep down in her heart her love for the King still lingered, but his name never willingly crossed her lips. She had been so outraged, and so humiliated, that, whatever

have been her secret desire, her pride forbade that any overtures for reconciliation should come from her. If such a thought crossed the King's mind, and it may have done so, for when he spoke of her it was always with respect, he took no steps. Happy would it have been for him if his declining years had been comforted by the care and affection of the woman whom nearly forty years ago he had made his wife, and who had always put his interests before her own. Lady Conyngham, who was incapable of appreciating Mrs. Fitzherbert's reticence, persuaded herself that she was manœuvring to return to the King. She jealously guarded every avenue of approach to him, and did her best by hints and innuendoes to harm Mrs. Fitzherbert. She even strove to prejudice the King against Miss Seymour, for she feared she might be a means of communication between him and Mrs. Fitzherbert. In this respect she completely failed. But she seems to have prevented the King from seeing her; for after the Lady Steward's appointment, Miss Seymour never went to the entertainments at the Pavilion. This, however, may have been due to the fact that she was much abroad, sometimes with Mrs. Fitzherbert, but oftener with members of the Seymour family. We quote a letter written at this time:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Miss Seymour at Brussels.

"SHERWOOD LODGE, *July* 29, 1822.

"Your letter, my dearest Minney, gave me the greatest pleasure imaginable, for what I suffered all Wednesday it is impossible to describe. The wind

was so high and the river so agitated that I did nothing but run from the house to watch the tide all day, and I worked myself up to a state of anxiety scarcely to be borne. . . . Several people called on me that morning, among the rest, the Duke of York. He took your letter and gave it to the King, and stayed with him whilst he read it. The King was extremely delighted and pleased with it, and said to the Duke, 'This is a very kind letter indeed.' He asked him questions—how long you were to remain abroad, and if, as he had been informed, I was going to join you, and pass the winter in Paris? To all of this the Duke replied that he knew nothing. I am very glad you wrote; I think it will make the Marchioness very angry, and I trust it will convince the King that the stories told him respecting you were only her own abrications. . . ."[1]

In the autumn Mrs. Fitzherbert joined Miss Seymour in Paris, where they remained the winter, instead of going to Brighton as usual. This was probably to avoid the King and Lady Conyngham, who had come to the Pavilion in October, and prolonged their stay until the following April. Lady Conyngham was far from popular at Brighton, for Mrs Fitzherbert's absence was put down to her, and on more than one occasion, when she drove

[1] The above letter, and the others which follow in this volume, written by Mrs. Fitzherbert to Miss Seymour, afterwards Mrs Dawson Damer, were lent to me for the purpose of this book. I have selected them from a mass of similar correspondence. Mrs. Fitzherbert was not a very good letter writer, and the secret of her charm must be looked for elsewhere. As she once wrote to Mrs. Damer, "My pen and I are always at war."

out, she was greeted with unmistakable signs of public disapproval. The King saw and heard nothing of this, for he rarely went outside the Pavilion grounds.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was back in London for the season of 1823, and went out a great deal with Miss Seymour. The summer was spent as usual at Sherwood Lodge, and in December Mrs. Fitzherbert returned to Brighton, where she was warmly welcomed. "The poor of Brighton, to whom Mrs. Fitzherbert is endeared by her benevolences, wil have reason to rejoice at her return, and we hope she may make a protracted stay with us,"[1] writes a local paper, and another declared: "In her the poor ever find a pitying and relieving friend."[2]

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Miss Seymour at Hampton Court Palace.

"BRIGHTON,
"*Sunday, December* 14, 1823.

"Your letter this morning, my dearest Minney, gave me much pleasure, for I am so unused to be at Brighton without you, that the sight of it quite revived me, particularly to hear that you are to come to me on Saturday [for Christmas]. Pray do not disappoint me. You will be welcomed here by more than myself, for I have given out that I shall not receive company until your Ladyship makes your appearance. There are several strangers here, who don't know what to do with themselves, and they will be very glad to have a

[1] *Brighton Gazette*, December 18, 1823.
[2] *Brighton Herald*, January 24, 1824.

lounging place [illegible] evening.
But I am [illegible]
you arrive, and [illegible]
Saturday, I will have [illegible]
at dinner on Sunday. [illegible]
line to say you will [illegible]

"Brighton is [illegible] to
be had, and a great number of [illegible]
are here, including the Bedfords[1] [illegible] to-
morrow, and Lord Charlemont[2] will arrive the
day after. You will laugh when I tell you that
Lord and Lady Holland[3] came to visit me the
day after I arrived. [illegible]
on, but I have promised to [illegible] when
you come. You will be delighted at the great
improvements. The Chain Pier[4] is beautiful, and
I have a delightful view of it from my windows.

"Everybody who could gain admission went to
the King's Chapel this morning; the panel behind
His Majesty took fire, and the congregation were
nearly suffocated. Sparks of fire made their
appearance in the chapel, but as His Majesty did
not move, all the company sat quiet, frightened out
of their wits, as none of them dared stir. After
about three-quarters of an hour, when the fear of
being burned had subsided, the windows were thrown

[1] John, sixth Duke of Bedford, and Georgiana his wife.

[2] James, second Earl of Charlemont.

[3] Henry Richard, third Lord Holland, and Elizabeth, his wife, *née* Vassall. She married first, Sir Godfrey Webster, Bart., who divorced her for adultery with Lord Holland, whom she afterwards married. She was *the* Lady Holland, whose parties at Holland House were famous.

[4] The Chain Pier had recently been opened [illegible]. It was destroyed in a storm, December 4, 18[illegible].

open, and then people nearly died of the cold, but so far every one has escaped unhurt.[1] The Duke of York and the Clarences are expected here on the 24th. The poor Duke has had a bad cold, but he writes me word that he is better. God bless you, my dear Minney; my best love to Mr. and Mrs. George.[2] Let me have a few lines from you, and believe me, always, truly and affectionately yours,

"M. F.-H."

Mrs. Fitzherbert was so delighted with her reception at Brighton that she determined to stay there more in the future. This decision did not commend itself to the Lady Steward, who regarded the proximity of Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Pavilion as a danger. Moreover, she hated the place, and she determined to keep the King from Brighton as much as she could. She succeeded for a time, and Mrs. Fitzherbert was left in possession of the field.

During the London season of 1824, Miss Seymour became engaged to Colonel George Dawson, second son of the Earl of Portarlington. Miss Seymour had received many offers of marriage—some of them highly advantageous—but she was determined to follow the promptings of her heart. Though she dreaded the prospect of parting from her adopted daughter, Mrs. Fitzherbert did everything to further her happiness. The marriage was not to take

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[1] *Brighton Gazette*, September 11, 1824.
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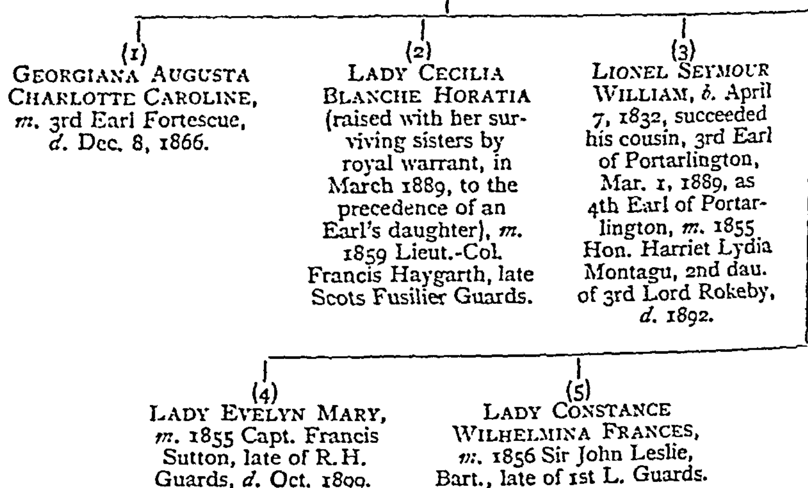
[1] *Brighton Gazette*, September 11, 1814

[2] Ibid., January 28, 1815

parties without end, and her lavish hospitality added greatly to her popularity in Brighton. When she left in May for London to make preparations for Miss Seymour's marriage, there was loud lamentation.[1] In Brighton Mrs. Fitzherbert still was queen, and the local papers reported her comings and goings, and everything she did, as regularly as though they were her court circular.

The marriage of Miss Seymour to Colonel Dawson took place in London on August 3, 1825.[2] The King sent the bride a handsome present, and a letter in which he bade her "be always good to his dear old friend, Mrs. Fitzherbert," a recommendation which she did not need, but which the King needed very much. Directly after the

[1] "May 12, 1825. Mrs. Fitzherbert, we regret to learn, leaves her Steine residence this day for Tilney Street. The absence of this lady is really a loss; for we know of no one who, to kindness of disposition, adds so great a share of consideration for the tradesman, and humanity and charity to the poor."—*Brighton Gazette.*





THE HON. MRS. DAWSON DAMER

Mrs. Fitzherbert's Adopted Daughter

(From the Miniature by Isabey. Lent by Mr. W. B. Boulton.
[illegible] Lady Constance Leslie)

wedding, Mrs. Fitzherbert went to Buxton. Her health was not good, and how deeply she felt the separation from her adopted daughter the following quotations from letters will show:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs. Dawson, Hampton Court Palace.

"BUXTON, *August* 7, 1825.

"I will not revert to my parting with you, Dearest. The distress that occupied my mind at the idea of a separation from you affected me so much that I could not say half that I wanted to say to you, but ran out of the house as fast as I could, so as not to annoy you by my sufferings. I am glad Hampton Court was made agreeable to you. . . . I hope too, my dear Minney, you have written a proper letter to the King. If you have not already done so, pray do it. It is what he had a right to expect, and when you see Mr. Forster,[1] I am sure he will be of my opinion."

"BUXTON, *Sunday, August* 21, 1825.

"It is quite impossible, my dearest dear Minney, *to express to you half of what my feelings are at* this moment. Your dear letters of Friday and Saturday I have received, and feel much gratified that at the moment you had so much to occupy you, you should think of me; though I cannot help feeling I *do* deserve it, from the very great and tender attachment I have ever felt for you since your birth. No mother, I am certain, ever loved

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her *own child* more dearly than I have loved you. I pray to God from morning to night that your happiness may be as complete as I wish, and as you deserve. Mr. Dawson will, I trust, do all in his power to render you happy. I would wish very much to see you before you go abroad, but I do not know how to manage it, for I am at such a distance from you. In the state of mind I am in at this moment I should like to set out directly and visit you, but, alas! I am far from well. Still I think we *might* meet half-way from this place, and pass a few hours together, but I do not know exactly what your plans are until I hear from you again. This is an odious place, and I would not have you think of coming here on any pretext whatever.

"I am so nervous that I am unable to write more. You shall hear from me again, when I am more composed; I can only add—May Heaven bless and protect you, my dearest child; it is the constant wish and prayer of your very affectionate

"M. F.-H."

What Colonel Dawson's sentiments were, is shown from the following letter he wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert a few days later:—

"For myself, my dear Madam, allow me to return you my warm thanks for your kind expressions respecting me. I trust I am fully aware of my good fortune, and of the treasure which Providence has bestowed on me. I pray you to be confident that I am quite conscious of that indissoluble bond of affection which unites you and my wife, and I would

wish to prove to you that my most ardent hopes are that I shall not only be able to make *her* happy, but also, if it is in my power, to contribute to *your* comfort by every act of my future life, and thus showing you that I am not quite unworthy of being so blessed."

This promise Colonel Dawson fulfilled to Mrs Fitzherbert's great comfort and satisfaction, and she became much attached to him. But at first she felt her loss deeply. Then, as always, Mrs Fitzherbert was fortunate in her friends; many of them, sympathising with her in her loneliness, entreated her to visit them. She accepted some of their invitations, for she could not bear the thought of going back to her empty home.

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs. Dawson, Tilney Street.

"BUXTON,
"*Saturday morning, September* 1825

"MY DEAREST MINNEY,—The Duke of Devonshire[1] came over to visit me here a few days ago, and wanted me to go to Chatsworth immediately, as he was going on the 13th to Doncaster Races Not being well, besides being engaged to go to Hooton, I excused myself, but he insisted on my going to make him a visit on my return (which will be on the 24th), and I have agreed to do so. . . . I had a letter yesterday from the Duke of York, just as he was setting out for Brighton. I do not think he knew you were in town or he would

[1] William Spencer, sixth Duke of Devonshire (1790–1858), unmarried

have called upon you. You have no idea of the talk at this place of his being shut up in an *absolute ale-house* upon the Moors, with the party he visited, and of the *extraordinary* things that occurred, some very laughable and amusing; but as I have a very real and sincere regard and affection for the Duke I feel very sorry and hurt at all the absurdities and ridicule their conduct has occasioned. I hear they are all to meet at Lord Hertford's. . . .

"I feel very jealous of what you write with regard to poor old Forster. I always thought that I was a great favourite, but *I* fear you have superseded me. He is an excellent person, and I have a very sincere regard for him. I forget what I wrote in the postscript he showed to the King. I know from the Duke of York I am in high favour with his Majesty. I don't know for what!"

Shortly after this Mrs. Fitzherbert left Buxton on a visit to Hooton, near Chester, the seat of Sir Thomas Stanley,[1] who had married Mrs. Fitzherbert's niece Mary, daughter of Sir Carnaby and Lady Haggerston.

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs. Dawson, Paris.

"HOOTON, *October* 3, 1825.

"I have stayed at this place longer than I intended; I have been so comfortable that I felt I

[1] Sir Thomas Stanley, ninth Baronet, married Mary, only daughter and heiress of Sir Carnaby Haggerston, Bart. Their second son, Roland, who succeeded his brother, Sir William Stanley, tenth Baronet, as eleventh Baronet, assumed by royal licence, in 1820 pursuant to the will of Henry Errington, Esq., of Sandhoe and Red Rice, Hants), the surname of Errington.

spare my life that I may be blessed with the sight of you again, and that I may see you settled somewhere or other *in a house of your own*, and as happy and as comfortable as I wish you to be. But I am getting into the dismals, so I shall say no more on the subject.

"Gurwood[1] wrote me a long letter the other day. He came over with despatches . . . and is gone back to take up his residence at Paris. He offers to come over and escort me to Paris whenever I have a wish to go there. The Hollands have played the same trick with the Granthams they did with me some years ago at Cheltenham; they having taken possession of the *première* at Meurice's Hotel which was promised to the Granthams, and Lady Holland says nothing shall make her give it up. In consequence of this, the Granthams have returned to the Isle of Wight until they can hear of something to suit them. Really that woman is a plague to everybody!

"I have written a sad scrawl, but the number of people that are running in and out of my room quite distract me. Adieu, my dearest; may every blessing attend you, prays ever your affectionate

"M. F.-H."

"TILNEY STREET, *November 7*, 1835

"I arrived here the day before yesterday, rather glad to get to my fireside before the very bad weather set in I have been a sad rambler. After I left Chatsworth, I went to the Fitzherberts' and

[1] Colonel John Gurwood, C.B. (1790-1845), Deputy Lieutenant of the Tower, private secretary of the Duke of Wellington, and editor of the "Wellington Despatches."

praises. The Duke seemed very much pleased at your having bought so many French hats, &c.; he is greatly occupied with ladies' dresses; he says you dress remarkably well, and that at one of his parties you desired him to admire a gown you had on; he said it was certainly very pretty, but that it was an old one, he had seen you in it before. He expects everybody to be dressed here as if going to a ball, and looks rather shy if you have not a fresh gown for every day. This is rather a bore to me, for I hate the trouble of dressing up, and in this particular I am afraid I don't stand very high in his estimation.

"I meant to have gone away two days ago, but I caught a violent cold, which has confined me to my bed, but I am so much better that I intend going to-morrow to Mr. Fitzherbert's,[1] and thence to Trentham[2] for a day or two. After that, as the weather is getting cold, I shall make no more visits, but return the end of the month to Tilney Street.

"I am very much pleased you are so delighted with your tour; I am told the road from Genoa to Rome is beautiful. When once you are settled there I shall begin to count the weeks and the days until you will return. Indeed, indeed, my dearest Minney, when I get out of spirits, which I very often do, the only thing I look forward to with any pleasure is the thought of once more embracing you, my dear child, and I constantly pray to God to

[1] Mr. Thomas Fitzherbert, nephew of her second husband, at Swynnerton, Staffordshire.

[2] Trentham Hall, Stoke-on-Trent. The Marquess of Stafford's.

spare my life that I may be blessed with the sight of you again, and that I may see you settled somewhere or other *in a house of your own*, and as happy and as comfortable as I wish you to be. But I am getting into the dismals, so I shall say no more on the subject.

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"TILNEY STREET, *November* 7, 1825

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[1] Colonel John Gurwood, C.B. (1790-1845), Deputy Lieutenant of the Tower, private secretary of the Duke of Wellington, and editor of the "Wellington Despatches."

thence to Trentham, where I met the whole family. Lady Stafford[1] was constantly lamenting you were not her daughter-in-law; there is nothing they wished for so much as to have had you Lady Francis.[2] I ought to be, and indeed am, very much pleased with my tour. It is quite impossible to tell you all the kind attentions and courtesies I have received from everybody."

[1] Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland (in her own right), married George Granville, second Marquess of Stafford, who was created in 1833 first Duke of Sutherland.

[2] Lord Francis Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, who wished to marry Miss Seymour, was the second son of the first Duke of Sutherland, and was later created first Earl of Ellesmere.

CHAPTER X

IN THE GREY OF LIFE

(1825–1829)

THE next few years of Mrs. Fitzherbert's life, the years that followed the marriage of her adopted daughter, were uneventful. With the King she had no communication whatever, either directly or indirectly, and she lived wholly apart from the world of politics. She had now reached the age of threescore and ten years, and though her days yet were by no means all "labour and sorrow," she had her share of suffering and grief. Her strength was slowly failing, and one by one her friends were passing away. Despite the fact that her niece, [illegible], to whom she was much attached, was living with her, she felt very much alone.

To add to her worries the controversy on *The Subject*, as she called it (her marriage with the Prince of Wales, now George IV), was [illegible] the publication of Moore's 'Life of Sheridan' [illegible] Sir William Knighton, the [illegible], was going about [illegible] marriage had [illegible] calumnies against Mrs. Fitzherbert [illegible] Croker was also [illegible] deal with the matter [illegible] a creature of [illegible]

judiced against Mrs. Fitzherbert, and did everything in his power to harm her position. The King was very intimate with him at this time. He called him "Croko," and had long and intimate conversations with him on divers subjects. On one of these occasions (if we may believe Croker, for there is no other evidence) the King entered on the subject of his "supposed marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert," and declared that there was no truth in "that absurd story of my supposed marriage."[1] We cannot accept this statement of Croker's without hesitation; but if the King did say so, it may be classed with the other hallucinations which beset him at this time. His power of self-deception was so great that he talked himself into believing that he was at the battle of Waterloo, and even appealed to the Duke of Wellington to verify the statement. "I have heard your Majesty say so before," replied the Duke drily. If, therefore, George IV. persuaded himself that he had been present at Waterloo, it is quite possible that he also persuaded himself that he had not been present at his own marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert. And we may be sure that Croker did not seek to disillusion him, but adroitly fell in with the mood of his royal master. Be this as it may, it is certain the press at this time teemed with references to Mrs. Fitzherbert and her "supposed marriage," and many scandalous hints and innuendoes which annoyed her greatly. She had all the documents necessary to prove her marriage in her possession, and with a word she could have silenced her calumniators. But that word was not spoken,

[1] Croker, *op. cit.*

and in none of her letters does she make the slightest allusion to these annoyances But she felt the cruelty of it deeply, and nearly all her letters at this time are tinged with melancholy

Mrs Fitzherbert to the Hon Mrs Dawson

"TILNEY STREET, *November* 15 1825

"How very kind of you Dearest, to think of me, and of all my sufferings at Nice Your search after the tomb[1] must have been fruitless, it is in one of the chapels I purchased in a church and I conclude there could have been no one at Nice who could recollect me at such a distance of time since the event took place. But your thinking of it pleased and gratified me. The Duke of York stayed with me all yesterday evening in high good humour He has come to stay a month in town, and then I suppose he will go his round of visits, to Belvoir, &c"

"TILNEY STREET, *November* 30, 1825

"The Duchess of Rutland died on Thursday[2] It is said she was not ailing for more than two days. Henry Halford was sent for express to Belvoir, but arrived too late. My poor friend, the Duke [of York] is very much shocked and grieved I have seen a great deal of him since I came to town He came to call on me the day after the event had taken place, and was very much affected by it He has such a kind heart, and they were such *dear*

[1] The tomb of Mr Fitzherbert, Mrs. Fitzherbert's second husband, who died at Nice

[2] Elizabeth, Duchess of Rutland, daughter of fifth Earl of Carlisle, married the fifth Duke of Rutland, died November 29 1825

friends, that I like him better for the feeling he shows on this occasion."

Mrs. Fitzherbert remained in London throughout the winter of 1825–26. She was ill with rheumatism and asthma, and for two or three months was confined to her house in Tilney Street. At one time considerable anxiety was felt for her, on account of her age, but her fine constitution stood her in good stead, and when the summer came she rallied. In the autumn she went to Bath. She writes from there to Mrs. Dawson:—

"BATH, *October* 30, 1826.

"I have nothing to tell you, Dearest, for we are as dull and stupid as possible. There is scarcely a creature I know here except some old *Fograms*, whose company I would rather be without. People have made such melancholy histories about the poor Duke [of York] that I began to be quite unhappy, but I was fortunate enough to get a letter from him on Friday, written in very good spirits, and telling me he was much better, and that his medical adviser assured him he was so, and that he felt stronger, and seemed comfortable in every respect. This makes me quite easy. I trust in God he may continue so."

During the autumn the Duke of York grew worse, and was reported to be in great danger. Mrs. Fitzherbert was worried and anxious about

him, as the following letter, which she wrote to his physician,[1] shows:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Sir Henry Halford, Bart., M.D.

"Your letter, my dear Sir Henry, has grieved me to the heart; the account of the poor Duke is sad, very sad. I have long thought his case deplorable, but now I begin quite to despair, and to feel that there is no chance of his recovery. Alas! what a loss the country, his family, and his friends will sustain. I am sure none will feel or lament it more than I shall.

"The account of his having gone through the operation was publicly talked of here the day after it took place. I mention this for fear you should suppose I had communicated the contents of your letter, not one syllable of which ever passed my lips. I begin to think there is no such thing as a secret in the world.

"What shall I say, or how can I express my thanks—my gratitude to you for the trouble you have been so kind, so generous as to take with regard to my papers? You have no idea of the weight of anxiety and uneasiness you have removed from my mind. For I don't think I should have had a moment's peace or tranquillity had those papers fallen into the hands of those who on a former occasion made such mischief, and so many disagreeable scenes and confusion. I really do not

[1] Sir Henry Halford, Bart. (1766–1844), confidential physician to the King and other members of the royal family.

know what I should have done; it would have made me miserable.

"You are very kind in inquiring after me. The waters certainly have done me a great deal of good, but I am sadly tormented with headaches, partly rheumatism. My head at this moment is so confused that I scarcely know what I am about. If you should have a moment to spare, and will give me a line to tell me how the Duke goes on, you will do me a great favour, for I cannot tell you the anxiety I feel about him. God bless you, my dear and kind friend, for as such I must ever esteem you; and with every good wish to you, believe me always, your very sincere and truly grateful

"M. F.-H."[1]

It will be seen from the above that Mrs. Fitzherbert's anxiety was not only on account of the Duke of York, but also concerning the letters which she had written him. They had been in constant correspondence for over thirty years, writing quite freely to one another, both on private affairs and public events. Mrs. Fitzherbert kept all the Duke's letters, all the King's letters, and all the documents relating to her marriage in a box, and carried them about with her wherever she went, keeping them always in her bedroom. On one occasion, shortly after the accession of George IV., these papers nearly fell into the possession of Sir William Knighton, the King's private secretary,

1 This letter is published in the "Life of Sir Henry Halford," by William Munk, M.D. London, 1895.

who was at that time in league with Lady Conyngham. Knighton determined to get hold of them by fair means or foul. One day when the court was at Brighton, he called at Mrs. Fitzherbert's house on the pretext of inquiring after her health. She was ill in bed, and sent word she was unable to receive him. Nothing daunted, he forced his way into her bedroom, to the great alarm and agitation of the poor old lady, who knew what he was in search of. However, his quest was not successful.[1] Shortly after this "domiciliary visit"[2] Mrs. Fitzherbert took care to remove her papers to a place of safety. Knighton's audacious attempt led her to think that her correspondence with the Duke of York at least should be destroyed. She sent all the Duke's letters back to him, with the exception of a few brief notes of no importance (such as those quoted in this book), and the Duke returned her letters to her. Lord Stourton gives the following account of the fate of this correspondence:—

"Previously to the death of the Duke of York, they agreed on both sides that all their correspondence should be destroyed; and she assured me that when Sir Herbert Taylor[3] gave her up her own correspondence, she was for two years employed in the perusal and burning of these most interesting letters. When Sir Herbert Taylor surrendered them to her in person, she told him that

[1] Sir William Knighton, Bart. (1776-1836), private secretary to George IV. (originally a surgeon).

[2] *Vide* Greville's "Memoirs"

[3] General Sir Herbert Taylor, G.C.B. (1775-1839), to the Duke of York.

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[2] *Vide* Greville's "Memoirs"

[3] General Sir Herbert Taylor, G.C.B. (1775–1839), private secretary to the Duke of York.

she had been almost afraid that they[1] would have got these papers from him. He replied 'not all the kings upon earth should have obtained them.' She added, that had she entertained mercenary views, she believed she might have obtained any price she had chosen to ask for the correspondence, which it was in her power to have laid before the public; that she could have given the best private and public history of all the transactions of the country, from the close of the American War down to the death of the Duke of York, either from her communications with the Duke, or from her own connections with the opposite party, through the Prince and friends."[2]

The Duke of York died on January 5, 1827, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.[3] His death left his next brother, the Duke of Clarence, heir-presumptive to the throne. The Duke of York had long struggled against a painful illness, and during the last months of his life his sufferings were agonising, but he bore them with fortitude, and continued until nearly the end to discharge his duties as Commander-in-Chief. The Duke took little part in politics, but during the last year or two of his life, he had come forward as "the Royal Protestant champion," and the strenuous opponent of Catholic Emancipation. The Duke had his failings, but he had also sterling good qualities. In public life he was sincerely devoted to his country; in private life he was a true friend. He was the

1 George IV. and Sir William Knighton.

2 Langdale's "Memoirs," pp. 142–43.

3 The Duchess of York had predeceased him in 1820.

most popular of all the royal brothers. Greville, who was not given to flattering princes, wrote of him, "He is the only one of the Princes who has the feelings of an English gentleman. His amiable disposition and excellent temper have conciliated for him the esteem and regard of men of all parties, and he has endeared himself to his friends by the warmth and steadiness of his attachments, and through the implicit confidence they have in his truth, straightforwardness, and sincerity."[1]

No one could testify to the sincerity of his friendship more than Mrs. Fitzherbert. In the death of the Duke of York she had lost her best friend, and one who stood on the very steps of the throne, her advocate and mediator with the King. Friendly as were her relations with all the royal brothers (except the Duke of Cumberland), the Duke of York was the first of all. Nothing shook their friendship, not family ties, not the dislike of the Duchess, nor the opposition of the Duke to Roman Catholic Emancipation. There is little doubt that, had the Duke of York lived to succeed George IV., Mrs. Fitzherbert's character would have been vindicated in the eyes of the world, by the public acknowledgment of the *fact* of her marriage. She would have been content to leave her cause in his hands.

Mrs. Fitzherbert spent Christmas in Bath, and she did not return to Brighton until the middle of January 1827. She remained there until May,[2]

[1] "Greville Memoirs."

[2] "Mrs. Fitzherbert, accompanied by Miss Smythe, visited our Fair on Ireland's Cricketing Ground on Monday last and made several

but in consequence of the Duke of York's death she gave no entertainments, and had no visitors except Mrs. Dawson. The King was also at Brighton. He arrived there a fortnight after the Duke's death, and at first saw no one, though after a few weeks the music was resumed. He was very ill with gout, but the only answer given to callers was, "The King is well." It was a melancholy winter.

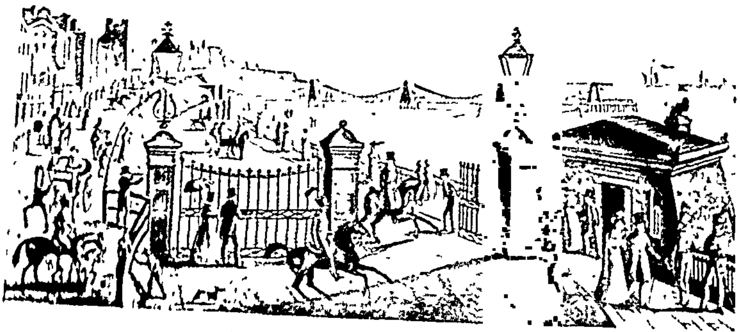
On March 7, 1827, George IV. left Brighton for the last time, and his Pavilion, the scene of so many early associations and pleasant memories, saw him no more. It was his intention to return, but Lady Conyngham prevented him. During the visit some one had written with a diamond on a window at the Pavilion some lines reflecting severely on the Lady Steward. This, combined with the fact that she was hooted in the streets, made her vow that she would never go to Brighton again, or suffer the King to return. She kept her word. The following letter of Mrs. Fitzherbert was written at this time:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs. George Dawson.

"BRIGHTON, *March* 5, 1827.

"You will be surprised to hear that his Majesty has given orders for his departure on Wednesday or Thursday next. This I understood has surprised the Household very much, and report says there is some misunderstanding, but I believe they are all

purchases. Mrs. Fitzherbert enjoys the best of health, and her countenance still retains all its sweetness, and no inconsiderable portion of its former beauty."—*Brighton Gazette*, May 10, 1827.



THE CHAIN PIER, BRIGHTON, *circa* 1825

(*From a Drawing in the possession of* Mr JOHN HAINES)

going on as usual. Madam Lieven[1] goes either to-day or to-morrow; she was walking the other day with Lady Mary Hill,[2] who mentioned something about Mrs. Fitzherbert. Madam Lieven said she had no acquaintance with her. What do you think of that? It is really very entertaining, her way of going on!"

"BRIGHTON, *March* 15, 1827.

"I have just received a letter from Rush, the poor Duke of York's steward, to offer me to purchase some lamps I gave the Duke some years ago. It would make me quite unhappy to have them back again, and would bring all sorts of uncomfortable facts to my recollection. I would therefore beg George to be good enough to see Rush, to thank him from me for his attention, but to say that I must decline taking them, particularly as I have written to a friend to purchase me something the Duke was in the habit of using. It would be more precious to me than anything else."

At this time, in consequence of a difference between the King and Lady Conyngham, there was a revival of the rumours (which were periodical) that a reconciliation was likely to be effected between the King and Mrs. Fitzherbert. These rumours seem to have reached the ears of Mrs. Dawson, who must have rallied the old lady on the subject, for in her next letter she writes:

[1] The Princess Lieven, Russian Ambassadress, who was a great friend of the Duke of Cumberland.

[2] Mary, youngest daughter of the second Marquess of Downshire, died unmarried 1830.

"What can you and Louisa[1] mean by your jokes and insinuations about the Pavilion? I think you have both lost your senses upon that subject. It is, I assure you, quite news to me, nor can I account for what has given rise to such foolish reports."[2]

To the Hon. Mrs. Dawson Damer,[3] Paris.

"TILNEY STREET, *Sunday, October* 10, 1827.

"The Duke of Sussex was with me yesterday. He is going a long tour of visits. The King, the day he went to the Queen of Wurtemburg's birthday[4] at St. James's, announced to his Family that he was going to pull down the entire palace of St. James's, and Marlborough House too; and as Prince Leopold has the latter only for nine years to come, he should pay him £3000 per annum for turning him out—£1000 less than he pays rent for it now! People are all in amazement at these proceedings. It is also said that the King is to reside at Devonshire House this winter, in conse quence of the alterations he is making at the Cottage at Windsor. What *will* he do next?"

"TILNEY STREET, *November* —, 1827.

"I imagine, dearest Minney, that you will receive this on the 23rd [Mrs. Damer's birthday]. I wish

[1] Miss Louisa Smythe, daughter of Mrs. Fitzherbert's eldest brother, Mr. Walter Smythe.

[2] Brighton, March 18, 1827.

[3] Colonel Dawson had now added the name of Damer to his own, in accordance with the will of his aunt, Lady Caroline Damer, who died in 1826.

[4] Charlotte Augusta Matilda, Princess Royal of Great Britain, Queen of Wurtemburg, born September 29, 1766. She died in 1828, the following year.

I were with you to express to you in person all I feel upon the occasion, and how sincerely, and from the bottom of my heart, I wish you, my dear Child, many happy returns of the day, with everything you wish for or desire. You talk of old age—think what I am [seventy [illegible]ne] I assure you I should be very sorry to have to pass my youthful days over again It is a great consolation, at my advanced age, to have those I love the most (yourself and Mary,[1] my two children) both well and happy, and to receive from them kindness and affection, and to end my days in peace and quietness"

"BRIGHTON, *November* 29, 1827

"Here I am with all England at Brighton, there never were so many people of Fashion here before, and my house has been like a Fair all day yesterday, and to day But I shall not be comfortable, my dearest Minney, until I get you and George here It is the only thing I have to look forward to with pleasure. . . The day before I left town I was with Princess Sophia[2] for an hour and a half. She spoke very kindly of you She said she was quite sure Lady C[onyngham] had done what she told them all she intended to do, and that the King said he was very happy at it. Henry Halford assured me that he was now quite well, he had been ill with the gout, and had lost a good deal of his size, by Halford's making

[1] Her niece Mar[illegible]

[2] [illegible]

who [illegible]

Sop[illegible] was [illegible] step-sister to Mrs. Dawson Damer's mother, Lady Horatia Seymour

him live very abstemiously, but he was the better for it."

"BRIGHTON, *Monday, December* 3, 1827.

"The appointment of Sumner[1] to the Bishoprick of Winchester makes a great talk, and brings forth abuse from all quarters. From what I hear it will be a very stormy session—everybody is dissatisfied. I hope all your riots in Paris are at an end. The Hollands are still here, and nothing can be more civil and kind than they are to me, sending me game and all sorts of good things. You know how I have dreaded their dining with me. The other day the Duke of Bedford dined with me, and I mentioned to him my fear of inviting *her*. He said she had constantly refused dining with him, but that I was in such favour, that he dared say she would dine with me. Poor thing, she is very unwell, and there the thing rests for the present. Lord Egremont[2] and all his tribe are here. . . . George Brummel[3] is to be made Consul at Calais. The King has given his consent. I think he has great merit, after all that has passed. Some people are

[1] Charles Richard Sumner (1790-1874), Bishop of Winchester. Sumner was for some time tutor to Lord Francis Conyngham, and was in great favour with Lady Conyngham and George IV. He was successively appointed Librarian at Carlton House, Vicar of St. Helen's, Abingdon, Canon of Worcester, Bishop of Llandaff, and, in November 1827, Bishop of Winchester.

[2] George O'Brien Wyndham, third and last Earl of Egremont (1751-1837). He was a very wealthy peer, given to princely hospitality, a patron of the arts and of the turf. The "tribe" was composed of nine illegitimate children.

[3] George Bryan Brummel (1778-1840), the celebrated "Beau Brummel"; he was then living at Calais, but Mrs. Fitzherbert was incorrect. He was never Consul at Calais, but was appointed Csulno at Caen in 1830.

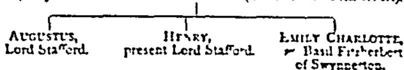
more partial to their enemies than kind to their friends!"

Mrs. Fitzherbert remained in London all the winter. During the spring (1828) Mrs Fitzherbert's niece, Miss Smythe, who had lived with her since Mrs. Damer's marriage, became engaged to Captain Edward Stafford Jerningham,[1] second son of Lord Stafford. Mrs Fitzherbert was delighted with the engagement of her niece to one of her own faith, and a member of a family whom she held in great esteem. In the summer she paid a visit to Costessy, Lord Stafford's place, and the marriage took place soon after.

Later Mrs. Fitzherbert went to Paris on a visit to the Damers, and she brought them back with her to London; in the autumn she went to Brighton for the winter. The Jerninghams spent Christmas with her, and the Damers came for the New Year (1829). During their visit, Mrs. Fitzherbert gave a fancy dress ball, which is thus described in a local paper:—

"Mrs. Fitzherbert's grand Fancy Dress Ball was not only the most splendid party given during the present season, but the most splendid probably ever seen in Brighton. There were more than two hundred present, including all the Fashionables now residing in the town. No magnificence can be

[1] Hon. EDWARD JERNINGHAM (second son of Lord Stafford), 1804-1849, m. June 1828 MARY ANNE SMYTHE (niece of Mrs. Fitzherbert).



conceived greater than that displayed in the various dresses, which were exceedingly rich; but they differed in one essential respect from the Fancy Balls which have before taken place here, there being a greater proportion of Court dresses and uniforms. The fine rooms of the noble mansion, thus lighted up, presented a most brilliant and dazzling appearance; and on the supper table every delicacy was seen in profusion. Kirchner's excellent quadrille band was in attendance. It always affords us great pleasure when we have to notice such magnificent *fêtes* as this, since independently of the immediate gratification afforded, the town is materially advanced by such acts of hospitality and munificence. We do hope that Mrs. Fitzherbert may long enjoy health to promote the prosperity of the town.

"Among those present were Lord Granville, who was dressed in Windsor uniform; Lord Shaftesbury, Lord and Lady Templetown, the Marchioness of Bristol, the Ladies Hervey, the Countess of Lindsey, Lady C. Stewart, and Lord Porchester, all of whom wore very rich dresses. Mrs. Fitzherbert, who, we are happy to say, looked in excellent health and spirits, wore a rich dress of white satin trimmed with blonde, and a white dress hat; Hon. Mrs. Dawson Damer, a handsome black fancy dress, head-dress of diamonds; Hon. Mrs. Jerningham, a black velvet dress, with a richly ornamented stomacher; Hon. Miss Jerningham, an elegant Grecian dress composed of tulle, ornamented with gold roses, head-dress of gold and roses; Miss Smythe, a beautiful Turkish dress, with handsome turban of scarlet and gold, and

a profusion of diamonds; Miss C. Smythe looked most lovely in a simple white fancy dress, with a veil confined with a chaplet of white roses; Lady Charlotte Bertie, a rich and elegant Turkish dress, composed of graceful draperies of muslin and gold; Lady Emily Butler, 'Mary Queen of Scots', Lady Ellenborough, 'Queen Elizabeth'; Miss Courtney Boyle, 'the widow of Ali Pacha', Miss G. Courtney Boyle, 'Ariel' (this had a very singular and fanciful appearance); Lady Scott in the costume of 'A Lady of the Court of Elizabeth,' a rich dress composed of satin and pearls, head-dress of silver and pearls; Lady Falkiner, a rich Turkish dress of black and gold, garniture of gold flowers and satin, head-dress and stomacher brilliantly ornamented with diamonds; Lady Susan Hotham, in a Swiss costume, body of black velvet and petticoat of black silk with cherry-coloured rouleaux, a fancy hat of chip, trimmed with artificial flowers; Mrs Montefiore, 'Queen Elizabeth,' a superb dress of gold lama, and white satin stomacher richly studded with jewels, and a head-dress of diamonds; Lady Coutts, a Spanish costume; Lady Beresford as a Sultana, and Lord Beresford as a Turkish Sultan; Countess St Antonio, as 'the Goddess of Music'; Lady Gibbes, a Parisian costume. Many young ladies as Circassians and Swiss. A great number of the Officers of the Life Guards, Blues, and other Regiments, besides many Officers of the Navy and others in fancy dress and uniforms."[1]

Mrs Fitzherbert went to Tilney Street in June, where she remained throughout the season. In

[1] *Brighton Gazette*, January 14, 1829.

good health and spirits, she returned to Brighton in September (1829); but as her house on the Steine was being repaired and re-decorated, she stayed at the Royal York Hotel. While she was there, the Duke and Duchess of Clarence arrived at Brighton from Dieppe, and landed at the Chain Pier. The Duke and Duchess did not land until dusk, and they were received by the Municipality bearing lanterns, and the pier was illuminated. The Duke and Duchess walked through an immense crowd to the Royal York Hotel, escorted by marines, and were received at the door by Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Marchioness of Downshire, and Lady Mary Hill. This was the first presentation of Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Duchess of Clarence, who received her with great kindness and cordiality, and remained her friend the rest of her life. As to the Duke of Clarence, he had been much attached to Mrs. Fitzherbert for years, and always treated her as one of the family.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEATH OF THE KING

(1829–1830)

A CAUSE of right and justice in which Mrs. Fitzherbert had long been interested won a great victory this year (1829). Roman Catholic Emancipation passed into law. The election of that doughty champion of Roman Catholic claims, Daniel O'Connell, for county Clare the previous year, forced the matter to a crisis, and Emancipation came with a rush into the forefront of politics. The Duke of Wellington, Peel, and other members of the Government, saw that it was impossible any longer to withhold this measure of justice, and prepared to yield to public opinion. But the King was violently hostile to the Catholic claims, and his hostility was inflamed by the Duke of Cumberland and Lady Conyngham. To Peel, who had submitted a memorandum on the subject, the King sent the following answer: "The sentiments of the King upon Catholic Emancipation are those of his revered and excellent father. From those sentiments the King never can, and never will, deviate." But the King's protest was of no avail. Loyal Roman Catholics had made every allowance for the conscientious, if mistaken, objections of George III., but they absolutely refused to extend the same

indulgence to George IV., whom they regarded as a man of no principle. The Duke of Wellington, Peel, and other Ministers agreed in refusing to consider seriously the King's appeals to his conscience. So the King, after much shuffling, and with great reluctance, had to give way, and in his speech to Parliament on opening the session of 1829 announced a measure of relief.

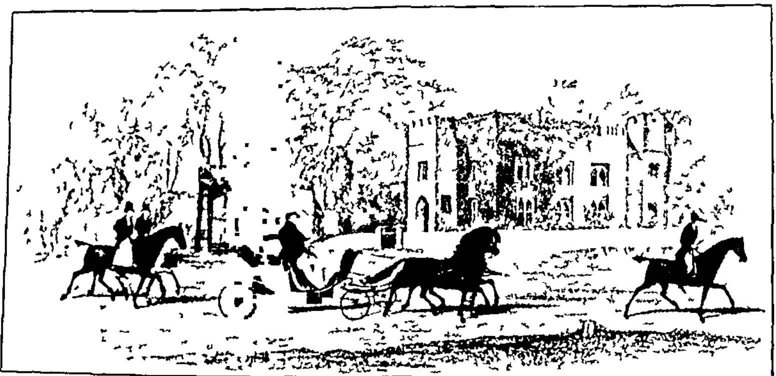
The King, though yielding, was by no means vanquished. He intrigued with the Duke of Cumberland against his own Ministers. The Duke of Cumberland's interference led to a scene in the House of Lords, when the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex, who supported the Roman Catholic claims, attacked the Duke of Cumberland, and described his conduct as "infamous." Peel introduced a Roman Catholic Relief Bill, and the measure passed through both Houses by considerable majorities. By this measure a different form of oath was substituted for the oath of supremacy;[1] Roman Catholics were admitted to Parliament, and there was no office from which they were henceforth excluded except those of Regent, Lord Chancellor of England, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and Viceroy of Ireland. Until the last the King threatened that he would abdicate rather than give the royal assent to such a measure, but when the time came he signed it (April 13, 1829), though not without a feeble protest. He wrote to the Lord Chancellor, "The King never before affixed his name with pain or regret to any Act of the Legislature."

[1] This is now superseded by a general oath of allegiance. It was simplified in 1868.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, like all Roman Catholics, was much interested in the progress of this measure through Parliament, but she took no part in the agitation connected with it. Perhaps, knowing the King's strong prejudice to Emancipation, she was anxious not to widen the breach between them by publicly taking up an attitude of opposition to his views. After all, her advocacy would make no difference; she had no longer any influence in political matters; she knew that the King was feeble in health, bowed down by burdens of state, and unable to cope with his imperious Ministers. She had no wish to add, even remotely, to his worries. In the excited state of public opinion which preceded the passing of the Act, she avoided London, and remained at Brighton until the measure had received the royal assent. In her letters to Mrs. Damer at this time, she makes not the slightest reference to Emancipation, though it touched her nearly, or to the settlement of a question which had much to do with her final separation from the King. This may in part have been due to the fact that she and her adopted daughter were of different faiths, and the subject of religion was never touched upon between them. Her reserve can only be ascribed to prudence, not to indifference, for as the years went by she became more and more devoted to her Church, and everything connected with it. Though tolerant in her views, liberal in her charities, and giving freely to any deserving person or institution, without distinction of creed, she never for a moment forgot

that her own religion had the first claim on her. For years she had supported the Roman Catholic Mission at Brighton, and she now contributed £1000 towards the building of a church there, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and gave liberally towards its support. She fitted up a beautiful little oratory in her house on the Steine, and she kept a resident chaplain, the Rev. William Lopez. Morning and evening she worshipped in her oratory with those of her household who were of her faith. The others she never attempted to influence in any way.

The Roman Catholic Relief Bill was the last act of George IV., if his act it could be called. The worry and distress which it caused him preyed upon his health. Neither the Roman Catholics nor the Ministers would give the King credit for sincerity in his opposition to Emancipation, yet he was undoubtedly sincere. Like George III., he considered it to be a breach of his coronation oath, and he felt that he had failed in his duty as a defender of the reformed religion. "Let them get a Catholic King in Clarence," he said bitterly, after the Bill had passed into law, and he threatened to go to Hanover and return no more to England. Of course a great deal of this unavailing lamentation was due to the state of the King's health, which was seriously affected by dropsy, gout, and accumulated ills. Down at Windsor he was slowly dying. He became more nervous and irritable every day, and at times was subject to partial blindness. His physical sufferings, which were agonising, he bore with the courage and fortitude of his race, but his



GEORGE IV DRIVING AT WINDSOR

(Inman [illegible])

mind showed signs of giving way under the st
To this was probably due those strange hum
whims, and delusions which marked his decli
days. He now lived at Windsor in almost ori
seclusion. He seldom went outside the park
the roads were strongly guarded, no stra
was admitted inside the gates, and when he d
out his equerries rode on before to see that no
was spying. He drove in a low phaeton in
closely-guarded grounds, sometimes alone, s
times with Lady Conyngham. The Lady Ste
kept close watch over him; she saw that her
would not be very long, and she tightened
grasp. She and Knighton ruled the Kin
private matters, as the Duke of Wellington d
public affairs. Feeble and ailing, the King
no longer the strength to withstand any of
Though he quarrelled with the Duke, he knev
to be a statesman who had the honour and w
of the country at heart. He clung to Lady Co
ham because she amused him, and chased aw
demon of depression, and he bore with Kni
because he was indispensable to him.

In the autumn of 1829 the King's phys
tried to raise him from his lethargy; they r
mended a change of air, and advised him to
Brighton. They failed, for both the Duke of
berland, who had now become the King's fav
brother, and Lady Conyngham were opposed
idea. He was safe in their hands at Windso
they meant to keep him there. If he went f
afield who could tell what alien influence

cially, there was danger. The King had shown lately a habit of dwelling on the past, and in his wanderings the name of Mrs. Fitzherbert had more than once come to his lips. Some dormant chord in his memory vibrated; he thought of the woman he had loved, the wife he had forsaken, and tears sprang to his eyes, whether of remorse or maudlin sentiment, who shall say? Perhaps they were tears of self-pity, for the loneliness and lovelessness of his old age. Lady Conyngham noted these moods, and always turned the subject of Mrs. Fitzherbert adroitly aside; it was soon forgotten. But if the King went to Brighton early associations would be recalled to him in force, and with Mrs. Fitzherbert living next door who could say what might happen? True, the old lady was seventy-three, and could hardly be considered as a serious rival. But Lady Conyngham did not feel safe, and so, when the King was on the point of yielding to his doctors' advice and going to Brighton, she pretended to be very ill, and quite unable to leave Windsor. The King would not go anywhere without her, and the idea was abandoned. Some rumour of this may have reached Mrs. Fitzherbert's ears, for she writes:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs. Dawson Damer.

"BRIGHTON, *November* 10, 1829.

"There is some talk, my dear Minney, of the King coming here. I hear the Duke of Cumberland is *outrageous* with his Majesty for quitting the environs of Windsor. I fear we shall have

the Duke here, though many people say that the King comes to Brighton to get rid of him. . . . But I do not expect the King will come. *Lady Conyngham is seriously ill, and the Duke* of Cumberland uses all his interest to prevent a visit here. The Pavilion is made quite ready to receive his Majesty, and some people think that he will come, but I do not think he will. . . . Think of me, Dearest, in this house quite alone, and unless I have you or the Jerninghams I am content to be so. I am perfectly comfortable, and everybody is so kind and good to me. My dear friend Lady Holland is my opposite neighbour. She sends constantly to inquire after me, and has been to see me, but I have not yet returned her visit. I gave you a poor account of myself in my last letter; I am now, thank God, quite well again, and have exerted myself to the utmost to make the inhabitants gay and happy. I wish I had you, Dearest, to assist me, for I am not able to do much; my mind is youthful, but my body is *very old;* the least thing fatigues me."

With the New Year, 1830, the King grew worse. To his other maladies were now added an affection of the heart and a difficulty of breathing. Yet still the doctors hoped that his strong constitution would pull him through. Conspicuous among these courtly physicians was Sir Henry Halford, an able, upright man. His enemies (all successful men have their enemies) dubbed him "the eel-backed baronet," and declared that "a flexible knee and supple back had enabled him '*to boo*' his preten-

sions into the palace, and indeed into almost every nobleman's mansion in the kingdom." Sir Henry was one of the few disinterested people about George IV. in the last months of his life. Another, of course, was the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, in whom at this crisis both the King and the heir-presumptive, the Duke of Clarence, placed absolute confidence. "In the critical state of his Majesty, the oftener you can find time to proceed to Windsor the better," wrote the Duke significantly, for he knew well the self-seekers with whom the dying monarch was surrounded. The hypocritical Knighton and the avaricious Lady Conyngham fought over him for mastery, each hating the other, yet neither strong enough to dislodge the other. Lady Conyngham, knowing that the sands were fast running out, took advantage of the King's condition to lay hands on whatever she could find, and no one dared to stop her. All the time she professed the greatest distress for the King's illness, and prayed with unction for his recovery. "First she packed, and then she prayed; and then she packed again," writes one.[1] Members of the royal family came occasionally to see the King; the Duke of Cumberland came frequently, and obtained donations for charities in which he was interested. But the poor King, whose lonely and unloved condition compelled pity, was hardly in a condition to see any one. His delusions increased, and his memory failed him; he

[1] It is said that two waggon-loads of jewellery, plate, &c., were sent away from the Castle by Lady Conyngham during the last months of the King's illness.

passed most of his time in bed, and rarely quitted his room

So things went on until May 1830, the King now rallying, now failing again, the mystery which always surrounds a royal sick-bed kept the people ignorant of his serious condition But when it was announced in May that the levées and drawing-rooms were postponed, alarming rumours began to be circulated. Mrs Fitzherbert, who was at Brighton, knew no more of the King's state of health than any one outside the inner circle of Windsor, but when it was announced that he would hold no court she wrote to Mrs Damer, "I am sorry that the drawing-room is postponed, in my opinion there will be nothing of the sort this season I am *very sorry* for the cause, and, for several reasons, it has worried me a good deal. But I hope the King will get well again, though I am sure he will not be able to hold either levée or drawing-room."

She had at this time no idea of the King's dangerous condition, but the thought of him ill and suffering aroused her sympathies, and she felt keenly that she, who was nearest to him, was at such a time kept at arm's length She begged Mrs. Damer to let her know any scrap of news she heard.

Mrs Fitzherbert, to the Hon. Mrs Dawson Damer.

"BRIGHTON, *Saturday morning*

"I have this day got your letter, dearest Minney. George's[1] account the day before of what the Duke

[1] Colonel George Fitzclarence, eldest son by Mrs. Jordan of the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV). He was created Earl of Munster in 1831

of Wellington reported had made me hope that the King was not so ill as rumour said, and that the drawing-room, &c., being put an end to, would relieve his mind. I remembered the King always liked to make himself out worse to excite compassion, and that he always wished every one to think him dangerously ill, when little was the matter with him. This I had hoped was the case at present, but, alas! I fear it is not so from your account, and from the accounts of others. I think I am better here than in town for a few days longer. The constant histories respecting the King, and people's curiosity to find out what I think, and what I do, would annoy me so much that, sad as it is here, I am spared many uncomfortable moments."

Again she writes a few days later, when the report was more favourable:—

"Your letter this morning, my dearest Minney, was very acceptable; for, having read an account of the King in the *Court Journal*, I did not know what to think. The number of falsehoods that are circulated, though I do not believe them, worry me sadly, and one does not know what to believe or on whom one can depend. I pray God he may recover. The thing that seems unpleasant is the physicians never leaving him, and the parade of the bulletins at St. James's, which formerly were never posted up except on very serious occasions. But perhaps the etiquette is altered now. I have now fixed my departure from this place for Wednesday next. I have passed my time here very quietly; I can always occupy myself, and I feel that, from

indisposition and old age, this sort of life is the only thing that is fit for me."

Mrs Fitzherbert lingered at Brighton consumed with anxiety on the King's account. This anxiety she tried to conceal even from Mrs. Damer, for on the subject of her relations with the King she was always very reticent, even to her nearest and dearest. At last, when the news reached her that the King was really in danger, she determined to seek information at the fountain-head.

"I have," she writes to Mrs. Damer, "frequently intended writing to Sir Henry Halford. I have always delayed for fear of being thought intruding and curious, but your letter has given me courage, and I have by this night's mail dispatched a letter for him under cover to Whale[1] to leave at Sir Henry's door, for if it were known, in this gossiping place, that I had written, or received, a letter, a thousand falsehoods would be afloat."

The kind-hearted physician, who was an old and trusted friend of both the King and Mrs. Fitzherbert, sent her the following answer to her letter:—

Sir Henry Halford to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"WINDSOR CASTLE, *June* 3, 1830

"MY DEAR KIND MADAM,—I have not written a letter, nay not a note, since I came to Windsor on Sunday Se'nnight, excepting to such of the Royal Family as required information, and as it was my duty to give it. But I yield most willingly to our

[1] Mrs. Fitzherbert's butler in Tilney Street.

friendship what I should withhold on any other possible grounds and motives.

"The King has been, and continues to be, excessively ill, with embarrassment and difficulty of breathing. The worst circumstances under which I ever witnessed the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex, under their attacks of spasmodic asthma, hardly come up to his Majesty's distress at times. What is to be the result I can hardly venture to say with confidence. His Majesty's constitution is a gigantic one, and his elasticity under the most severe pressure exceeds what I have ever witnessed in thirty-eight years' experience. I think I can say with much more certainty what must be my *own* fate, unless a speedy amendment or fatal issue arrives soon, for I have devoted myself to his Majesty's service from a grateful sense of his confidence in me, as well as from my loyalty; and the constant calls upon my powers, both of body and mind, now press almost too heavily upon me, as they occur both night and day.

"Pray continue to believe me, my kind affectionate friend, my dear Mrs. Fitzherbert, your faithful and attached servant,

"HENRY HALFORD."[1]

On receipt of this letter Mrs. Fitzherbert nerved herself to take a step which she never would have taken under any other circumstances. At the time she spoke no word of it, even to Mrs. Damer. The thought of the King, her husband, lying on

[1] This letter, which has never been published before, was found among Mrs. Fitzherbert's papers after her death.

his sick-bed, suffering and alone, moved her to the heart. At such a time all was forgotten and forgiven; all the wrongs and indignities he had heaped upon her. She conquered her pride, and her fear of repulse, and remembered only that she loved him. She wrote him the following letter, in which the conflict between her love and her pride can be clearly seen:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to His Majesty the King.

"Sir,—After many repeated struggles with myself, from the apprehension of appearing troublesome or intruding upon Your Majesty, after so many years of continued silence, my anxiety respecting Your Majesty has got the better of my scruples, and I trust Your Majesty will believe me most sincere, when I assure you how truly I have grieved to hear of your sufferings. From the late account, I trust Your Majesty's health is daily improving, and no one will feel more rejoiced [than I] to learn Your Majesty is restored to complete convalescence, which I pray to God you may long enjoy, accompanied with every degree of happiness you could wish for, or desire.

"I have enclosed this letter to Sir H[enry] H[alford], as Your Majesty must be aware that there is no person about you through whom I could make a communication of so private a nature, attended with a perfect conviction of its never being divulged.

"I have the honour to be, &c."[1]

[1] The above copy of the undated letter which Mrs. Fitzherbert wrote to George IV. shortly before his death was written in her own

Mrs. Fitzherbert despatched this under cover to Sir Henry Halford, and besought him to give it to the King. She prayed that the answer would be a summons to the King's bedside, and she hurried up to London, so as to be nearer Windsor if need arose, though it was almost too much to hope that she would be sent for. Sir Henry Halford watched a favourable opportunity, and gave Mrs. Fitzherbert's letter to the King, telling him from whom it came. The King seized it with eagerness, read it with emotion, and placed it under his pillow, and then—apparently forgot all about it. Perhaps it was stolen from him while he was asleep, or put on one side lest he should recall its existence. At any rate no answer came to Mrs. Fitzherbert. She had written too late. The dying monarch had by now partly lost control of his faculties. He was incapable of remembering things, or of concentrating his mind upon any subject; part of the time he was unconscious, and most of the time asleep, and even when awake, he was often subject to strange delusions, though when he rallied he was able to talk coherently. His hands were so swollen and crippled with gout that he could no longer hold a pen, and he affixed a stamp to documents instead of the royal sign-manual. The Duke of Wellington and the physicians felt that the end was not far off. The Bishop of Chichester, Dr. Carr, formerly Vicar of Brighton, was commanded to Windsor. The King knew well what the Bishop's

handwriting, and was placed by her among the papers she deposited in Coutts's Bank in 1833, though it does not appear on Langdale's list. It is published here by gracious permission of his Majesty the King.

presence signified, and with quiet courage prepared himself to die. He had "two satisfactory interviews" with the Bishop, who prayed with him, and he read a good deal from the Bible which had been placed by his bed-side.

The King lingered, now rallying, now falling back, until the evening of Friday the 25th of June. His physicians then told him they could do no more, and that his death was only a question of hours. To this the King replied, "God's will be done," and a few moments later he asked, "Where is Chichester?" The Bishop of Chichester was summoned, and from his hands the dying King received the last Sacrament. After this, he composed himself to sleep. Sir Wathen Waller remained with him, Sir Henry Halford having retired to get a few hours' rest. The King slept quietly until nearly three o'clock, when he awoke, complained of a fainting sensation, and asked for sal-volatile. When it was brought to him he could not drink it; and pressing the hand of Waller, he exclaimed, "My boy, this is death." At that moment Sir Henry Halford, who had been hastily summoned, entered the room. The King gave him his hand, but could not speak, and a few minutes later breathed his last—at a quarter to three o'clock on June 26, 1830.

Thus died George IV. in the sixty-eighth year of his age and the eleventh of his reign. He has been one of the most abused of our English kings; yet now, some seventy years after his death, when the mists of passion and prejudice which obscured his memory have to some extent cleared away, it is beginning to be seen that the judgment passed on



THE STATUE OF GEORGE IV AT BRIGHTON

(By Sir Francis Chantrey)

CHAPTER XII

THE MINIATURE

(1830–1831)

WHILE these scenes were being enacted at Windsor, Mrs. Fitzherbert was waiting in London for the message that never came. The first knowledge of the King's death was conveyed to her by one who had heard the tolling of the great bell of St. Paul's. Later in the day came a kind message from the new King, William IV., who, even in the bustle and confusion consequent on his accession, did not forget what was due to his brother's widow.[1]

A week later, when all that was mortal of George IV. was laid to rest at Windsor, there came to Mrs. Fitzherbert Sir Henry Halford, who told her of the King's last moments, and of the way he had welcomed her letter. No doubt he explained to her that, in the King's dying condition, an answer was well-nigh impossible. His words brought her slight consolation, for she afterwards said that "nothing had so 'cut her up' as not having received one word in reply to that last letter."[2] Later again came tidings which brought her more comfort.

[1] "On the death of his brother, he (William IV) sent the Duke of Sussex to Mrs Fitzherbert to put her servants into mourning for his brother, yet he would have none himself, nor allow those around him to wear it."—"Greville Memoirs"

[2] Langdale, *op cit.* p 136

William IV. had sent her back, a few days after his brother's funeral, many of the jewels, trinkets, and miniatures which from time to time she had given the late King. They were found in George IV.'s cabinet; but one trinket was missing, and for this Mrs. Fitzherbert made particular inquiries. In the early days of their married life the Prince of Wales had given Mrs. Fitzherbert a large diamond. She had two tiny miniatures, one of herself, and one of the Prince, painted (it is said) by Cosway. The diamond was cut in two, and each of the miniatures was covered with the half-diamond, and set round with tiny brilliants. The whole formed two small lockets. The Prince took possession of the one containing the miniature of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and she of the other containing his portrait; both vowed they would wear them always in memory of their love. The trinket now missing was the miniature of Mrs. Fitzherbert which she had given to the King. She remembered how, in the will he had made in her favour more than thirty years ago, he had given directions that "*the picture of my beloved wife, my Maria Fitzherbert, may be interred with me, suspended round my neck with a ribbon, as I used to wear it when I lived, and placed right upon my heart.*" She wondered now if he had kept his word, and this last touching proof of his love would be granted to her. The fact that it was missing was in her favour, yet, after all these years of silence, she hardly dared to hope. She wrote to William IV. asking that search might be made for the miniature, and if found that it might be returned to her. The good-natured King caused inquiries to be made

concerning it, and with the following result, which he bade Captain George Seymour, brother of Mrs. Damer, communicate to Mrs. Fitzherbert without delay:—

Captain Seymour, R.N., to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"*Tuesday morning.*

"MY DEAR MRS. FITZHERBERT,—The King sent me yesterday evening to desire I would tell you that he had caused inquiries to be made about the little picture of yourself in a gold case, and that he had every reason to believe that it was *not* removed from the late King's neck. Sir Frederick Watson confirms this circumstance, which must afford you some satisfaction, however melancholy it will be, and I believe they are right, as it was seen on his neck a twelvemonth back also. Yours affectionately, my dear Mrs. Fitzherbert,

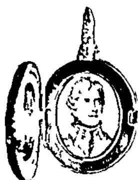
"G. F. SEYMOUR."

Further confirmation was later forthcoming from the Duke of Wellington, whom the late King had appointed his executor. When he was on his death-bed George IV. gave the Duke strict injunctions to see that nothing should be removed from his body after death, and that he should be buried in the night-clothes in which he lay. He referred to the matter more than once. The Duke promised that his Majesty's wishes should be obeyed, and the King seemed much happier for this assurance. After George IV.'s death the Duke saw that his wishes were carried out to the letter; the body was

disturbed as little as possible, and nothing was taken from it. Left alone with the body, which was then lying in an open coffin, the Duke noticed that something was suspended from the King's neck by a much worn black ribbon. He was seized with an uncontrollable desire to see what it was, and coming nearer he drew aside the collar of the shirt and lo! upon the dead man's breast was the tiny locket containing the miniature of Mrs. Fitzherbert. The Duke reverently drew the night-shirt over the jewel again, so that none might see. The motive of the King's dying request was now apparent to him, and the Duke saw that it was fulfilled. The King was buried with the miniature next his heart.[1]

It was not until some little time after George IV.'s death that the Duke of Wellington told Mrs. Dawson Damer, whom he met at dinner in London, that he had seen the missing miniature. It was evidently on his conscience to do so, for he told the story with some hesitation, and when he confessed to the curiosity which had led him to examine the locket, he blushed like a girl. The confession seemed to afford him relief, and he told Mrs. Damer that he left it to her discretion to tell Mrs. Fitzherbert or not. Mrs. Damer deemed

[1] Lord Albemarle in his "Memoirs," and Mary Frampton in her "Diary," both relate this story. I have been told it also by one of the daughters of the late Mrs. Dawson Damer, who had it from her mother's lips. Further corroboration is afforded by Mr. Charles Bodenham of Rotherwas, a connection of Mrs. Fitzherbert. He made inquiries of the Bishop of Chichester, who had attended George IV. in his last illness, who said, on his mentioning the name of Mrs. Fitzherbert, "Oh, she was very amiable—my faithful friend. Yes, it is very true what you heard, I mean about the body of the King, when they wrapped it round in the cere-cloth; but before that was done I saw a portrait suspended round his neck."—Langdale, "Memoirs."



(a) Open



(b) Closed

LOCKET CONTAINING MINIATURE OF GEORGE, PRINCE OF WALES

(*Companion of the locket given by the Prince to Mrs Fitzherbert soon after their marriage containing her Miniature which is buried with the King at Windsor This is the exact size of the original By permission of the* Countess Fortescue





it best to wait her opportunity, for Mrs. Fitzherbert was very reticent on all that concerned the late King. But one day, when Mrs. Damer had led the conversation in that direction, she ventured to tell her of the Duke's story. Mrs. Fitzherbert listened without a word, but presently Mrs. Damer saw that she was quietly weeping.[1]

Though Mrs. Fitzherbert said not a word, it was evident that she derived comfort from this pathetic proof of the King's affection. The cynic may say that it did not amount to much, but to her it seemed a great deal, and compensated for the fact that she had received no answer to her letter. He had sinned against her, it was true, but this seemed to show that his heart had been hers always. Now that he was dead she remembered only what was good in him. No word of blame or reproach crossed her lips—she forgave all, perhaps because she understood all; she remembered only that he had been her husband and she had loved him.

Several members of the royal family paid her visits, or wrote her letters of condolence; all her friends called on her and showed much sympathy, but she saw none of them. She remained in London through the summer, and lived in close retirement.

Apart from her grief, the death of George IV.

[1] Mrs. Fitzherbert left the companion locket, the one composed of the other half of the diamond, and containing the miniature of George IV., to Mrs. Damer. At her death Mrs. Damer bequeathed it to her eldest daughter, the late Countess Fortescue. It has now passed into the possession of *Lady Fortescue's* daughter-in-law, the present Countess Fortescue, who kindly allowed me to have a photograph of this interesting heirloom taken for this book. The photograph is the exact size of the miniature.

brought upon Mrs. Fitzherbert considerable anxiety. She distrusted Knighton, the late King's secretary, and she did not know what use he might make of the letters she had written to George IV., should any fall into his hands; she believed him capable of any baseness. Moreover, George IV.'s death affected her pecuniarily. She held the mortgage on the Pavilion at Brighton which had been procured for her by the Duke of York and Queen Charlotte. This guaranteed her an annuity of £6000 a year for life. The Duke of Wellington was one of the late King's executors, and to him she appealed to know how she stood. Sir William Knighton, who was the other executor, endeavoured to interfere, but Mrs. Fitzherbert absolutely refused to have any communication with him whatever. The Duke was not altogether friendly to her, but she knew him to be a man of honour and a gentleman—Knighton, she said, was neither. William IV. was of course appealed to, but he left the settlement of the matter in the hands of the Duke, premising that Mrs. Fitzherbert should receive most favourable consideration. The Duke was a Tory of the old school, and he held above all things that the law must be obeyed. Mrs. Fitzherbert had married the late King in defiance of the law, therefore the Duke held she was not married to him at all. But if the Duke was hard and unsympathetic, he was also just, and he recognised that she had special claims to consideration. He asked her if she had any papers which would constitute a claim upon the estate of the late King; she told him "she had not even a scrap of paper, for that she had

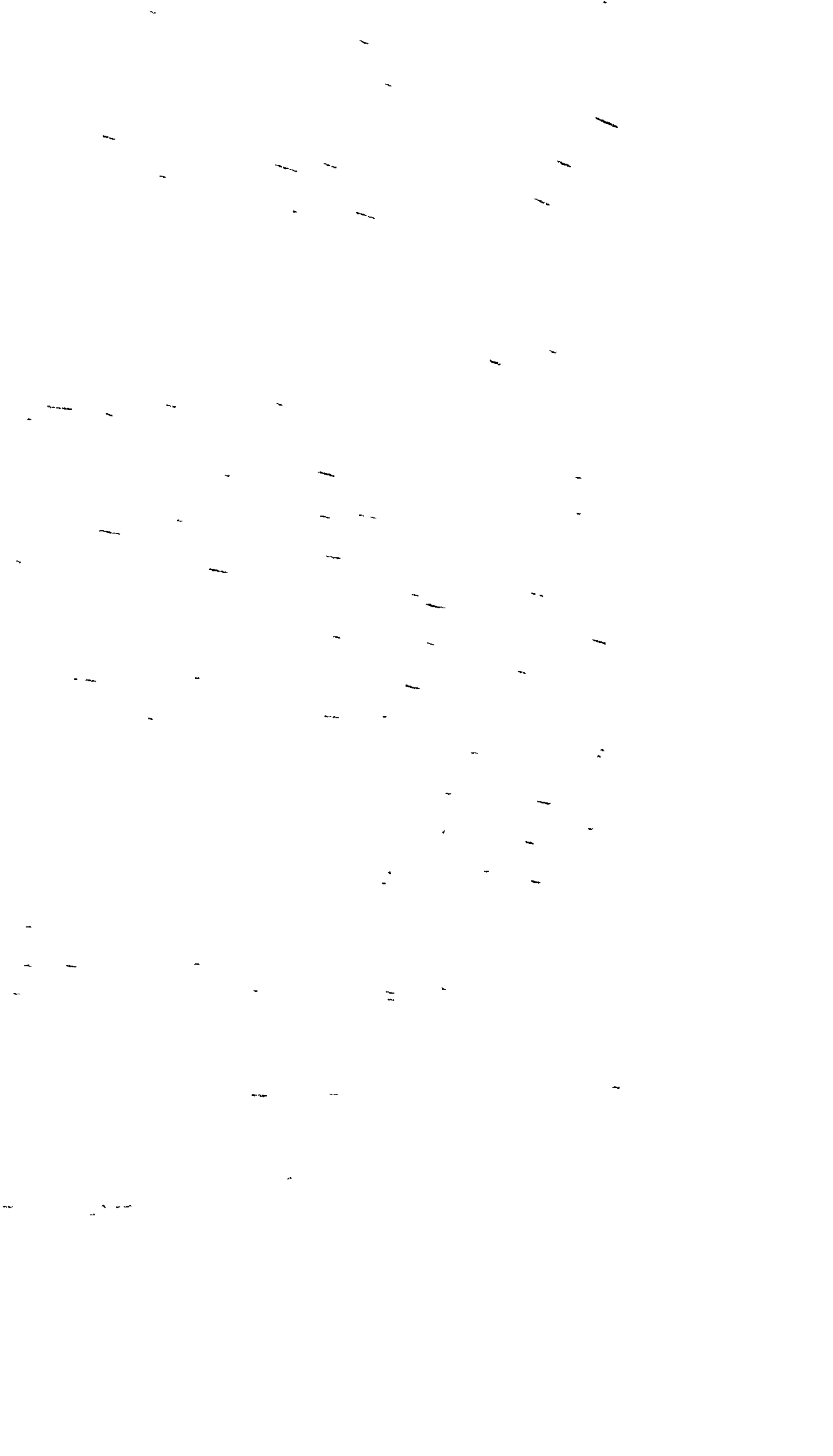
never in her life been [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]" Fortunately there was [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Colonel Gurwood, who [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] friend of Mrs. Fitzherbert [illegible] the private secretary of the Duke of Wellington [illegible] enjoyed the confidence of [illegible] [illegible] medium between them. [illegible] to him to check the [illegible] (real or imaginary) of Sir William [illegible] whom she persisted in regarding as her enemy. [illegible] worried her sadly. The following letter which she wrote on her [illegible] Dawson Damer, shows this:—

[illegible]

"My dearest [illegible] — [illegible] all the *[illegible]* [illegible] sleep, and therefore [illegible] o'clock church. I am [illegible] your dear little [illegible] so kind as to [illegible] very beautiful, and I [illegible] thanks for it. [illegible] for I shall make [illegible] order it [illegible] you do not [illegible] haps later in the [illegible] will be sure of [illegible] is no one I shall be [illegible] me happy [illegible] of [illegible] them for myself. [illegible] I was told it

[1] [illegible] she had [illegible]

[illegible]



unwell and good for nothing, and I wish I were a hundred miles away from London. As soon as this business is settled I shall go to Brighton, where I do hope to be a little quiet, but for my misfortune, the whole set of Royalties go there on the 30th, so what I shall do I know not. I have some thoughts of going to Malvern to enjoy a little rest and quiet at a distance from all the world. Halford and Jones both assure me rest and tranquillity are absolutely necessary to restore my strength and give me health."

The Duke of Wellington, with the King's sanction, did not take long to settle Mrs. Fitzherbert's affairs. The matter was finally arranged on this basis: Mrs. Fitzherbert was to be continued the annuity of £6000 a year which had been guaranteed to her by the deed on the Pavilion on the other hand, and in consideration of the annuity, she was to abandon any other claim which she might have on the estate of the late King. The following letter sufficiently explains matters:—

The Duke of Wellington to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"WALMER CASTLE, *August* 15, 1830.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—Mr. Lowdham has sent here the copies of papers which I will have submitted to you by the hands of your collector, Mr. Forster, by which the King will provide for the payment of your annuity charged upon Brighton, and you will release the late King's personal property from any demand you might have upon it on account of that annuity. I recommend you to sign

that release. In truth, if your annuity is charged upon the property at Brighton, your release of the personal is necessary only to enable the executors of the late King's will to hand over the whole of the personal property to the Treasury. Believe me, ever your most faithful servant,

"WELLINGTON."[1]

William IV.'s order for the payment of Mrs. Fitzherbert's annuity ran as follows:—

"WILLIAM R.

"It is Our Royal will and pleasure that the Keeper of Our Privy Purse, for the time being, do, and shall during Our life pay to Maria Fitzherbert of Tilney Street, in the county of Middlesex, Widow, during her life an Annuity, or annual sum of £6000, by four equal quarterly payments in the year; that is to say Lady Day, Midsummer Day, Michaelmas Day, and Christmas Day, the first payment to be made on Michaelmas Day next, in payment of an Annuity or annual sum of £6000 charged upon certain Freehold and Copyhold Property, belonging to his late Majesty King George IV., situated at Brighton in the county of Sussex by an Indenture dated 16th March 1808.

"Given at our Palace at Windsor the 18th day of August, in the first year of our Reign (1830)."

With this arrangement Mrs. Fitzherbert had to

[1] The above letter has been given me for publication in this book by Miss Adèle Gurwood, daughter of the late Colonel Gurwood, private secretary of the Duke of Wellington, and one of Mrs. Fitzherbert's executors.



Walmer Castle August 15
1830

My dear Madam Mr Lowtham has sent here the other of Papers which he will have submitted to you by the hands of your Solicitor Mr Porter by which the King will provide for the payment of your Annuity charged upon Brighton; and you will release the late King's Personal Property from any demand you might have upon it on account of that Annuity.

THE DUKE OF WELLING

I recommend to you to sign the Release
In truth as your Annuity is charged upon
the Property at Brighton your release of the
Personal is necessary only to enable the Executors
of the late King's Will to hand over the
whole of the Personal Property to the Crown.
Believe me ever Your most faithful servant
Wellington

Mrs. Fitzherbert
Wellington

LR TO MRS. FITZHERBERT

be content. She writes, a few days after the matter was settled, to Mrs Damer —

"TILNEY STREET, *August* 28, 1830

"I am better, and hope that a change of scene and air at Brighton will restore me, for I have been *dreadfully* worried, but I hope now that I shall be quiet. I am sadly grieved at all the Royalties going so much sooner than they had intended to Brighton. I am determined to keep as far off them as I can. I desired Gurwood to write and tell you the finality of my wretched business—I had not courage to write about it myself."

Mrs Fitzherbert went down to Brighton on the morrow. The day after, August 30, William IV and Queen Adelaide made their public entry into Brighton amid great rejoicings, the booming of cannon, the music of bands, the presentation of addresses &c., &c. The loyal Brightonians were overjoyed at the new King's promise that he would not desert Brighton. On September 3, four thousand children were entertained to a free dinner on the Steine under Mrs Fitzherbert's windows. The King and Queen visited the festivities. Two days later Mrs Fitzherbert writes to Mrs Damer —

"BRIGHTON, *September* 5, 1830

"We have, thank God, got a little quiet here. There never was anything like the public *fêtes* and rejoicings we have had, but I, except for seeing what passed out of my windows, have not joined

the gay throng. I am still a poor creature, and cannot regain my strength. . . . The Royalties are living very quietly, nobody at the Pavilion but the family; the only visitors are Mr. and Mrs. St. Clair;[1] she was the daughter of Lord Huntingtower. The town is so full you can scarcely drive along the streets, but except the Worcesters[2] and Lady Aldboro'[3] not a face I ever saw before except the inhabitants. . . . The Duke of Cambridge's son[4] is here, and he brought him to see me the other day. I never saw a more delightful boy, very good-looking; the Duke remains in England till after the meeting of Parliament. What confusion there is all over the Continent.[5] I am sadly afraid we shall get into some scrape in consequence."

Despite the festivities consequent on his coming to Brighton the kind-hearted King was not unmindful of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and sent her a message, through his son, Colonel George Fitzclarence, to ask her why she did not come to see him and the Queen at the Pavilion. Mrs. Fitzherbert then

[1] Hon. Katherine Camilla, married 1816 to George Sinclair, Esq., afterwards Sir George Sinclair, Bart.

[2] The Marquess of Worcester, who succeeded 1835 his father, as seventh Duke of Beaufort, and his second wife, Emily Frances, daughter of Charles Culling-Smith, Esq.

[3] Elizabeth, Dowager Countess of Aldborough, daughter of the Hon. and Rev. Frederick Hamilton, who married 1777 John, third Earl of Aldborough. He died in 1823; she survived him until 1845.

[4] Adolphus Frederick, Duke of Cambridge (1774–1850), seventh son of George III., Viceroy of Hanover, and his son, Prince George of Cambridge (1819–1904), afterwards second Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief.

[5] The French and Belgian *Revolutions of 1830.*

wrote to the King to say that her position was peculiarly difficult, and she had something to show him before she could obey his command, and wait upon him at the Pavilion. Moreover she was ill and suffering, and she begged him to do her the honour to first pay her a visit at her own house. The good-natured King went round to see Mrs. Fitzherbert the very next day without any ceremony. She received him, dressed in mourning, in her drawing-room on the first floor (she was too ill to go downstairs), the windows of which looked across the Steine to the beautiful bronze statue of George IV. by Chantrey, then recently erected.[1] The King greeted her with great kindness and affection; she recalled her long and intimate friendship with William IV., and resolved to tell him everything. No one else was present at this historic interview, but a year or two later Mrs. Fitzherbert gave Lord Stourton an account of what passed.

"Upon her placing in his [the King's] hands the documents which have been preserved in justification of her character, and especially the certificate of her marriage, and another interesting and most affecting paper, this amiable Sovereign was moved to tears by their perusal, and expressed his surprise at so much forbearance with such documents in her possession, and under the pressure of such long and severe trials. He asked her what amends he

[1] This statue was erected in 1828 The contract with Chantrey was for 3000 guineas, but it cost the great sculptor over 6000 guineas It is a masterpiece of art, and one of the few beautiful things in Brighton It is now in a neglected condition, and obscured by stunted trees which have been planted right in front of it!

could make her, and offered to make her a Duchess. She replied, that she did not wish for any rank; that she had borne through life the name of Mrs. Fitzherbert; that she had never disgraced it, and did not wish to change it; that, therefore, she hoped his Majesty would accept her unfeigned gratitude for his gracious proposal, but that he would permit her to retain her present name.

"'Well, then,' said he, 'I shall insist upon your wearing my livery,' and ended by authorising her to put on widow's weeds for his royal brother. He added, 'I must, however, soon see you at the Pavilion;' and I believe he proposed the following Sunday, a day on which his family were more retired, for seeing her at dinner, and spending the evening at the Pavilion. 'I shall introduce you myself to my family,' said he, 'but you must send me word of your arrival.' The King then took his leave."[1]

A few days later Mrs. Fitzherbert, in obedience to the King's command, dined at the Pavilion. When her carriage drove up to the door the King himself came out to receive her, handed her from the carriage, and gave her his arm into the house, where he presented her to Queen Adelaide, to his sister, the Princess Augusta, and the other

[1] The *Brighton Herald* of September 9, 1820, has the following:—"In the early part of the afternoon of last Monday, his Majesty (William IV.) honoured Mrs. Fitzherbert with a visit of about three-quarters of an hour. When the King came out of Mrs. Fitzherbert's, some person rather shabbily dressed went up to the carriage as it left the door and presented a note to the servants, requesting them to give it to his Majesty. This not being complied with, the fellow pushed forward and dropped the note into the carriage through the window. The Duke of Cambridge has visited Mrs. Fitzherbert several times. On Tuesday Mrs. Fitzherbert left her name at the Pavilion."

members of his family "as one of themselves." At dinner he placed her next him, and treated her in every way as an honoured guest. Mrs Fitzherbert wrote the following account of this visit.—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs Dawson Damer.

"BRIGHTON, *September* 10, 1830

"MY DEAREST MINNEY,—There is nobody I write to so often as yourself, though you are well aware that my pen and I are always at war. Nothing can be more amiable towards me than the inhabitants of the Pavilion. I have been asked there frequently, but being so lame I have not been able to profit of their invitation till the day before yesterday, when I hobbled into the house as well as I could. My reception was most flattering. I was overwhelmed with kisses from male and female; the Princess (Augusta) was particularly gracious I felt rather nervous, never having been in the Pavilion since I was drove away by Lady Hertford. I cannot tell you of my astonishment at the magnificence, and the total change in that house since my first acquaintance with it.[1] They lead a very quiet life—his family the only inhabitants. I think I counted to-day eight Fitzclarences.[2] George

[1] George IV had redecorated and enlarged the Pavilion since Mrs Fitzherbert had withdrawn from it in 1810

[2] The Fitzclarences were (1) George, first Earl of Munster, (2) Frederick, in the Army, (3) Adolphus, a Rear Admiral, (4) Augustus, in Holy Orders, (5) Sophia, married the first Lord de l'Isle and Dudley, (6) Mary, married General Fox, (7) Elizabeth, married the Earl of Erroll, (8) Augusta married first the Hon John Kennedy Erskine, and secondly Lord John Frederick Gordon; (9) Amelia, married Viscount Falkland All the eight younger children were raised to the rank of the younger children of a marquis

Fitzclarence comes next week. You never saw people appear so happy as they all do. Pray remember me most kindly to George (Colonel Damer), and with many kisses to the chicks,[1] believe me, my dearest Minney, yours affectionately.

"M. F.-H."

Speaking of this dinner party, Mrs. Fitzherbert told Lord Stourton that she was much surprised at the great composure with which she was able to sustain the trial of fortitude which appeared so alarming at a distance. She believed the excitement had sustained her. It was not so at the next dinner at which she was present in the same family circle. The many reflections which then oppressed her mind very nearly overpowered her. The next morning Mrs. Fitzherbert received this kind little note:—

Her Majesty the Queen to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"DEAR MADAM,—I hope you passed a good night, and have not suffered from it. This fine day will, I hope, enable you to take a drive, which I am certain will do you much good. I was delighted to see you looking so well yesterday, and trust we shall meet oftener next winter than we have done this year. Accept my best wishes for your health and happiness, and believe me, my dear Mrs. Fitzherbert, yours sincerely,

"ADELAIDE."

[1] Mrs. Damer had two children at that time.

Mrs. Fitzherbert had meant to leave for London, but now she stayed on a little longer. During the remainder of her sojourn at Brighton, she frequently dined at the Pavilion *en famille*, and received the greatest kindness and consideration from the King and Queen. She writes to Mrs. Damer :—

"BRIGHTON, *October* 1, 1830.

"Although you have forbad, my dearest Minney, my going to town, I cannot comply with your wish, and therefore you will see me arrive next Tuesday. I am now, thank God, got quite well again,[1] and able to enjoy a little society, which from indisposition I have been deprived of almost the whole time I have been here. I shall be delighted to see you. I promise I will not bore or annoy you, but I really cannot stay at Brighton any longer, having no one but a man and a maid, and not being able to ask anybody to eat their fish and mutton with me, which is rather uncomfortable. I am going to-day to dine at the Pavilion, and to-morrow with Lady Aldboro', who keeps open house and has very good parties, but is sadly mortified at having her Company often taken from her to dine with the Royalties, and never once being invited herself. I think it is very hard upon her, particularly as she has taken a house here and furnished it with her fine things from Paris, and means to make Brighton her home. I never saw this place so full in my life; you can scarcely get along the streets for the number of carriages, very smart, and the owners dressed out

[1] "We understand that Mrs. Fitzherbert has derived very [illegible] benefit from drinking the waters of the chalybeate at the Wick, Brighton."—*Brighton Gazette*, September 23, 1830.

as if going to some entertainment, but not a face you ever saw before."

Mrs. Fitzherbert went to London a few days after, but returned to Brighton in December. She was eagerly expected. A local paper writes, "The return of Mrs. Fitzherbert, that excellent benefactress and patroness of this town, to her Steine mansion, which continues to be anxiously looked for, will in all probability offer the signal for the resumption of the splendid pleasures called the 'local Almack's' at the fine rooms of the Old Ship Hotel. Our younger Fashionables are becoming quite impatient of further delay."[1] Mrs. Fitzherbert came a few days later, but "the younger Fashionables" had to wait a little longer, for she resigned her position as Lady Patroness of the Balls on the plea of ill-health (in reality, on account of her deep mourning for the late King). Three ladies were appointed her successors. "On retiring from this appointment," writes our chronicler, "Mrs. Fitzherbert takes with her the respect of the fashionable community, on account of the disinterested and impartial manner in which she disposed of the numerous claims made for admission."[2]

Mrs. Fitzherbert writes to Mrs. Dawson Damer:—

"BRIGHTON, *December* 30, 1830.

"I have been very busy giving up being patroness to the balls, and have had some trouble

[1] *Brighton Guardian*, December 8, 1830.

[2] These private subscription dances were continued until recent years, the lady patronesses being increased to six.

to get ladies to take my place. I must say they have been very kind to me. The three new patronesses are Lady Jane Peel, Lady George Seymour, and Lady Elizabeth Dickens I believe my house would have been set on fire if they had not had a ball last night. . . . I am quite happy at the thought of seeing you all, but I must beg of you not to come till the day *after* the New Year, as I have many weeks ago promised the King to dine with him on the 31st and New Year's Day. I should be quite miserable to be absent from you when you arrive, but you are well aware that I cannot send an excuse to the Pavilion. I have been there frequently, sometimes when I was scarcely able to go, and nothing could exceed the kindness, I may say the affectionate conduct, of the whole party towards me."

Colonel and Mrs. Damer and their children came to stay with Mrs. Fitzherbert a few days after the New Year. The King asked them to dinner with her at the Pavilion, and we find her giving an evening party in their honour.[1]

The King and Queen gave many entertainments at the Pavilion this winter, including a children's party, at which Queen Adelaide introduced for the first time into England the German Christmas-tree. To all these festivities Mrs Fitzherbert and her guests were bidden. At the end of January

[1] "Colonel and Mrs. Dawson Damer are staying here on a visit to Mrs. Fitzherbert, who, we are happy to learn, is better, and dined with the King on Sunday Last night Mrs. Fitzherbert gave a large evening party, including all the persons attached to the Court who are still in Brighton"—*Brighton Gazette*, January 12, 1832.

she said, she might die without a slur on her name.

Had the matter rested with William IV., she would doubtless have had her way. Though the King, like most of the royal family, had long known that some form of marriage had taken place between his brother and Mrs. Fitzherbert, he had no idea, until she had shown him the papers in her possession, that the ceremony had been of so solemn and binding a nature—not binding in law, but doubly so in religion and honour. The moment William IV. realised that Mrs. Fitzherbert was canonically the late King's wife, he did everything in his power to repair the wrong. He would have done more, but the Duke of Wellington set his face like a flint against any public acknowledgment of the marriage. The Duke, as we have already pointed out, held that as Mrs. Fitzherbert had broken the law of the land when she went through a ceremony of marriage with the heir to the throne, therefore she must abide by the consequences of her illegal act. Moreover, the matter was complicated now, as always, by the fact that she was a Roman Catholic. And why, the Duke argued, to satisfy the scruples of an old woman of nearly eighty, should they rake up again a dead scandal—a scandal which would bring discredit on the monarchy, already sufficiently discredited? The King (William IV.), in the opinion of the Duke of Wellington, had done all that was necessary, and even more than was necessary, to compensate Mrs. Fitzherbert for any hardship that she might have suffered, and there let the matter rest. There is

no doubt that the Duke acted in this, as in all things, from a high sense of public duty, and the Duke at this time, as Prime Minister, was practically dictator, and so he had his way. There was no public acknowledgment of the marriage, and Mrs. Fitzherbert went down to her grave with a doubt in many minds whether she had ever been married to George IV. at all.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REFORM BILL

(1830–1832)

Though Mrs. Fitzherbert now lived quite apart from public life, her interest in political affairs continued to be keen. The times were troublous and exciting; abroad, the revolution in France, by which Charles X. was driven from his throne, and Louis Philippe became King of the French, added to the spirit of unrest throughout Europe. At home, the carrying of Roman Catholic Emancipation had given an impetus to the great cause of Parliamentary Reform. Mrs. Fitzherbert had favoured the former measure because it affected her religion, but she was by no means well-disposed towards the latter. In politics she was an old-fashioned Tory, though many of the benefits conferred upon her co-religionists had originated with the Whigs. It was an age of change, of progress, and of liberty, and many, the old people especially, thought they were being hurried down the slopes of reform to the depths of revolution. Mrs. Fitzherbert was one of these, and when the Duke of Wellington resigned office in November 1830, and Lord Grey formed an Administration pledged to Reform, she, in common with many others, thought that a revolution was at hand.

On the first of March 1831, the Bill for Parliamentary Reform was introduced into the House of Commons by Lord John Russell. It went much farther than had been anticipated. Its progress was accompanied by violent scenes within the walls of Parliament, by great public agitation without. It was the one subject of conversation everywhere, from the peasant's cottage to the King's palace. The King favoured a moderate measure of reform; the Queen and the Fitzclarences were strongly opposed to any, and said so on every possible occasion. Mrs. Fitzherbert also expressed herself freely in condemnation of the measure, so much so that paragraphs found their way into the press. The *Morning Post* writes, April 14, 1831: "The report that a certain illustrious lady has interfered in the arguments on the Reform question, and that in a style by no means subdued, proves at any rate that she will have a *Will* of her own."[1] It is curious to contrast Mrs. Fitzherbert's freedom of speech on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, which affected her not at all, with her previous reticence on Catholic Emancipation. The following letters to Mrs. Damer afford an index to her views:—

"TILNEY STREET, *May* 4, 1831.

"Public affairs are going on sadly. Nothing can be more provoking, but though many think we are on the eve of a Revolution, everything in the great world goes on as usual—balls, dinners, and Ascot races; this week I hear is to be very gay. As I sent excuses to all the great parties, I never

[1] This paragraph was also copied into the Brighton papers.

saw the Duke of Orleans.[1] The day he went away he and his followers sent their cards here. I suppose Papa and Mamma desired him to call upon me, as he told the Smythes[2] his father said I was one of his oldest friends."

The second reading of the Reform Bill was carried by a majority of one, but the Government, having been twice defeated in committee, resolved to appeal to the country, and asked the King to dissolve Parliament. The Tories were of opinion that the King should do nothing of the kind, but send for the Duke of Wellington. However, the King determined to follow Lord Grey's advice, and he took the unusual step of going down to the House of Lords to dissolve Parliament himself. On going and returning he received a great ovation; the crowd greeted him with cries of "Bravo, old Boy!" "Three Cheers for the King and Reform." The city was illuminated and the country blazed with bonfires. The Queen, who was regarded as the heart and soul of the Court faction opposed to Reform, was extremely unpopular. One evening, when she was returning from a concert, she met with a very hostile reception from the mob, who hooted her all the way to St. James's. The mob then proceeded to Apsley House, the Duke of Wellington's, where they smashed every pane of glass in the windows.

The General Election throughout the country was

[1] The Duke of Orleans (1810–42) was the eldest son of King Louis Philippe and Queen Amélie, and father of the late Comte de Paris.

[2] Mrs. Walter Smythe, sister-in-law of Mrs. Fitzherbert (then a widow), and her two daughters.

attended with great excitement. The people demanded "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," and the candidates who pledged themselves to this, were nearly everywhere victorious at the polls. The new House of Commons, which assembled on June 14, 1831, contained a large majority of members pledged to Reform. The Bill was again introduced by Lord John Russell, and popular excitement was wrought to the highest pitch.

Mrs Fitzherbert to the Hon Mrs Dawson Damer

"TILNEY STREET, *August 21, 1831*

"The town is quiet, but at the smallest signal from Lord Grey is ready to rise. We are in a sad state God knows what is to happen Munster tells me he writes to you every other day what passes—he is violently unhappy, and really has a great reason to be so His father [William IV] is in great good spirits, he does everything Lord Grey wishes, and I am sorry to say is only occupied with dinners and balls It is quite melancholy! Tallyrand[1] appears much more active than our people Tallyrand is certainly the cleverest person in existence He is aware of the people he has to deal with and does whatever he likes The common people say he goes every night at twelve o clock into the Regent s Park to have private conversation with the Devil"

[1] Prince Talleyrand, the French Ambassador The *Morning Post* said of him, "Talleyrand is certainly the most extraordinary being of his kind the world has produced since the creation."

saw the Duke of Orleans.[1] The day he went away he and his followers sent their cards here. I suppose Papa and Mamma desired him to call upon me, as he told the Smythes[2] his father said I was one of his oldest friends."

The second reading of the Reform Bill was carried by a majority of one, but the Government, having been twice defeated in committee, resolved to appeal to the country, and asked the King to dissolve Parliament. The Tories were of opinion that the King should do nothing of the kind, but send for the Duke of Wellington. However, the King determined to follow Lord Grey's advice, and he took the unusual step of going down to the House of Lords to dissolve Parliament himself. On going and returning he received a great ovation; the crowd greeted him with cries of "Bravo, old Boy!" "Three Cheers for the King and Reform." The city was illuminated and the country blazed with bonfires. The Queen, who was regarded as the heart and soul of the Court faction opposed to Reform, was extremely unpopular. One evening, when she was returning from a concert, she met with a very hostile reception from the mob, who hooted her all the way to St. James's. The mob then proceeded to Apsley House, the Duke of Wellington's, where they smashed every pane of glass in the windows.

The General Election throughout the country was

[1] The Duke of Orleans (1810-42) was the eldest son of King Louis Philippe and Queen Amélie, and father of the late Comte de Paris.

[2] Mrs. Walter Smythe, sister-in-law of Mrs. Fitzherbert (then a widow), and her two daughters.

attended with great excitement. The people demanded "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," and the candidates who pledged themselves to this, were nearly everywhere victorious at the polls. The new House of Commons, which assembled on June 14, 1831, contained a large majority of members pledged to Reform. The Bill was again introduced by Lord John Russell, and popular excitement was wrought to the highest pitch.

Mrs Fitzherbert to the Hon Mrs Dawson Damer

"TILNEY STREET, *August* 21, 1831

"The town is quiet, but at the smallest signal from Lord Grey is ready to rise. We are in a sad state. God knows what is to happen. Munster tells me he writes to you every other day what passes—he is violently unhappy, and really has a great reason to be so. His father [William IV.] is in great good spirits, he does everything Lord Grey wishes, and I am sorry to say is only occupied with dinners and balls. It is quite melancholy! Tallyrand[1] appears much more active than our people. Tallyrand is certainly the cleverest person in existence. He is aware of the people he has to deal with, and does whatever he likes. The common people say he goes every night at twelve o'clock into the Regent's Park to have private conversation with the Devil."

[1] Prince Talleyrand, the French Ambassador [illegible] said of him, "Talleyrand [illegible] his kind the world has produced since the creation."

During a truce in the turmoil over the Reform Bill, William IV. was crowned. The King was indifferent about the Coronation; he had already put the crown on his head when he dissolved Parliament, saying, "Nobody shall crown me but myself." But the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Cumberland raised the question in the House of Lords, and said that it was a matter of grave constitutional moment. The King therefore yielded, and the Coronation took place at Westminster Abbey on September 8, 1831, but shorn of many circumstances of splendour; the dissatisfied spoke of it as a "half-crownation." Mrs. Fitzherbert was in London, but, in accordance with her rule of attending no official ceremonies, she did not attend the Coronation. Lord Munster wrote an amusing account of the ceremony for her edification, from which we quote the following:—

The Earl of Munster to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"*September* 9, 1831.

"Thank heaven, the Coronation is over! I only arrived in town on Monday, and found the Palace and its inmates in a glorious bustle. But for the rain, a most ridiculous rehearsal had been ordered for Wednesday. The wall separating the King's mews from Buckingham House garden was pulled down, and the King was to stand in the garden, and see all the coaches and horses and footmen in their state liveries go through this absurd and childish rehearsal! Fortunately, it rained; for they tell me, if the State coach, which weighs seven tons, had



WILLIAM IV.

once got on the wet turf or gravel, it would have so sunk that no power under an eighty-horse power steamer could have drawn it back to the stable The King, however, went over to the Abbey to see the *locale*, and in so doing caught a cold, which showed itself in a swelled face As it was his left cheek, no doubt it was ordered providentially, so that he could offer a larger surface to his liege Lords when they did their homage.[1]

"All London was on the move at six o'clock, and the arrangements for arriving at the Abbey were excellent, and no trouble or difficulty arose throughout the day I did not leave my house till half past nine, trusting to my crimson and gold liveries, which looked magnificent, to make all barriers fly open before me.

"The arrangements in the Abbey were the same as at the last Coronation, only there was a second chair for the Queen, on a stage a step lower than the King's About 150 peers and 70 to 80 peeressess were present The seats of the latter looked very well, like a parterre of tulips—only the Duchess of St Albans in the front looked like a full blown peony, the young Duchess of Richmond was next to her, making the contrast still more remarkable Lady Clanricarde in front looked well, and was seated next to Lady Salisbury All those peeresses who had received their coronets to make honest women of them were present, and it was amusing to see the virtuous ladies indignant at their neighbourhood . .

[1] The King strongly objected to being kissed, especially by the Bishops, and ordered that part of the ceremony to be struck out, but the Bishops protested *en masse*, and he had to submit to the ordeal.

"When the peers did homage the Duke of Wellington was loudly and spontaneously cheered, which was all very well, as the great Captain of the Age, though contrary to etiquette. But the silly Whigs made it political by cheering Lord Grey, and then some fools cheered Brougham, and then it became ridiculous, from the attorneys' clerks and sheriffs' officers who had got smuggled into the galleries applauding the Law Lords!

"I had not embraced (I find that is the correct expression) the King since my birthday, when ten years old, on which occasion he told me that I was no longer a boy, and that he did not like kissing (I beg pardon)—men. He told me when I 'embraced' him in the Abbey that he was not at all tired. The sermon of the Bishop of London was good and impressive, and had the advantage of only lasting seventeen or eighteen minutes.

"The scramble for medals was highly indecorous, very like schoolboys quarrelling at chuck-farthing and fighting for ha'pence. I had left my cocked hat in the King's dressing-room, and giving my coronet and robes to one of his pages, I jumped on my horse and saw the whole procession on its return. It was a fine sight, but one coach-and-six is so like another coach-and-six that it is after all but a tame affair. Tens of thousands of loyal, *alias* Reforming, spectators—all very vehement, of course. Frederick,[1] who, I think foolishly, had charge of the procession (which formerly was done by the Head Constable of Westminster), had arranged it well, but in his anxiety to be as fine as possible

[1] Lord Frederick Fitzclarence

was nearly killed. He had put a Persian bridle on his horse, so heavy with silver that it absolutely dropped off, and he went along Pall Mall and Charing Cross like Johnnie Gilpin, till fortunately he was stopped without an accident."[1]

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs. Dawson Damer.

"TILNEY STREET, *September* 9, 1831.

"The Coronation by all accounts went off beautifully, and everybody seemed pleased. I saw nothing of the procession, for I had got cold at the Breakfast at Chiswick last week, though we fortunately had a beautiful day. The Duke [of Devonshire] was in higher force than ever I have seen him. A remarkably good dinner, the illuminations, fireworks, and the house and grounds beautifully lit up. By nine o'clock dancing began, and I felt rather tired and came away. There was dinner for a hundred guests, and the scene was altogether very gay. Since then I have been confined by another attack of influenza, and have not been able to leave my house. I have had three dinner invitations from the Palace, and have been obliged to send excuses. You will see the extraordinary[2] list of Peers. I understand there are to be fifteen more made to get a majority in the House of Lords. Several have refused accepting this dignity, and several that ought not to be peers, from birth or situation, are very anxious to be created. This is lowering the

[1] This letter [illegible] blished

[illegible] Grey,

[illegible] Upper

peerage sadly. You will read all the names in the papers. My friend the Landgravine[1] has gone to Homburg. Both she and the Duke of Cambridge left town in the afternoon."

Soon after the Coronation the public interest was again absorbed in the Reform Bill. The measure passed the House of Commons on September 22 by a large majority, and was sent up to the House of Lords, where it was fiercely debated for many nights. The struggle reached its climax in the early hours of the morning of October 8, 1831, when, after an all-night debate, the Bill was thrown out by forty-one votes. The action of the House of Lords was followed by riots and disturbances in London, and throughout the country. The King, who was alarmed at the growth of the democratic spirit, suggested that the Bill should be remodelled, but the Government was determined to carry it as it stood, and this change in the King's views led the Ministers to seek a reason for it, which they found in the royal household. The Queen's hostility to Reform was notorious, and she, it was said, was influenced by her chamberlain, Lord Howe, whom the King had already rebuked for "chattering about the Reform Bill." Lord Grey therefore requested the dismissal of Lord Howe. The King agreed, but the Queen was highly indignant, and refused to appoint a successor to her chamberlain. Lord Howe, though he had to resign officially, determined, with the Queen's permission, to continue in office

[1] Princess Elizabeth, daughter of George III., who married in 1818 the Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg. She died in 1840.

unofficially. This unwise action gave rise to many false and absurd rumours. *The Times*, though it did not repeat the worst of these, spoke of the "domestic importunity" to which the King was subjected, in order to turn him from his political views, and it reminded the Queen that "a foreigner was no very competent judge of English liberties, and that politics were not the proper field for *female* enterprise or exertion."

Mrs. Fitzherbert, who had also received a hint from an exalted Personage not to "chatter so much about the Reform Bill," had now patience to keep silence, and could only relieve her feelings on paper. We quote the following from her letters to Mrs. Damer through the autumn:—

"TILNEY STREET, *October* [illegible]

"I should have written before, but really I have been *so* much worried and alarmed by all the [illegible] that have been going on here for three days (since the Lords threw out the Bill), that I could settle to nothing. The alarm everybody is in as to what may happen is sadly increased by the [illegible] from different parts of the country. It is [illegible] similar to what passed in France that it is really quite *frightful*.[1] Your friend Lady [illegible] [Bathurst] is for setting off for [illegible] [illegible] believe if it was not [illegible] to go there too, or anywhere to [illegible] quiet. The newspapers will [illegible]

[1] At Nottingham the Castle was [illegible] jail was forced open; at [illegible] and many public buildings were [illegible] disturbed state.

than I can do on the state of politics. Nothing will move the Ministers, and no one wishes to be put in their place. I trust that, as they have been the cause of all these disagreeable and frightful occurrences, they will endeavour to put an end to them; but I fear it has gone too far for us to expect much good. *The People* are now our Sovereign, Ministers, &c., and their demands seem to be the order of the day. . . . I dined yesterday at the Palace, and am to meet the Grand Duchess[1] there on Thursday; she is going to Petersburg in a few days. There is great distress amongst them all at Court at Lord Grey's having insisted on turning out Lord Howe.[2] He was a great favourite with every one, and the conduct is looked upon as very harsh and tyrannical, and it will never be forgotten, particularly as the King made a point of not having the Queen's household disturbed, saying that Ministers might do what they pleased with *his* establishment, which he is forced to alter every day."

"TILNEY STREET, *October* 26, 1831.

"I wrote to you before about Lord Howe having been turned out of his place. The Ministers, I believe, are sorry now for what they have done, having brought a host of enemies upon themselves. The manner in which it was done was most insulting and ungentleman-like, and will never be

[1] The Grand Duchess Helena of Russia.

[2] Richard William Penn Curzon Howe, first Earl Howe, was chamberlain to the Queen, and was supposed to influence her in her opposition to the Reform Bill. He was forced to resign office by the Government.

forgotten or forgiven. The Queen has always received the Ministers with every mark of kindness and attention. She feels herself, and with good reason, uncommonly insulted and ill-treated, and though she is obliged to receive them, she now takes no notice of them, and will not speak to any of *the set*. It is very unfortunate, for besides ill-treating her, it is exposing the King to annoyance, who is made most uncomfortable. In short it has set the whole family in an uproar. God knows how it is all to end! The King is so entirely at Lord Grey's orders that he has no will of his own.

"I met the whole of the Grey family at the Palace the other day, and they were particularly civil to me. I was rather disappointed with the Grand Duchess, I had heard so much of her beauty—she is certainly pretty and pleasing and [illegible] with the finest diamonds I ever saw, [illegible] to our Queen's."

[illegible]

"Everything is [illegible] in London that I [illegible] to do, and at Brighton [illegible] Brighton, I feel [illegible] Royalties. That [illegible] year are very [illegible] I shall take a [illegible] me and, instead of [illegible] and keep all my [illegible] to dine there every [illegible] Brighton, which [illegible]

my dining there the other days of the week. They are all very kind to me, and I feel very grateful, but you know *what it generally is.* There is a terrible squabble going on between Lords Howe and Erroll,[1] and the whole family are in a sad state of confusion and quarrel. The history is too long for a letter, and I daresay you will hear of it in Paris. The horrid Radicals in Brighton would not allow fire-works or illuminations for the King's arrival, which has always been done. Between you and me, I shall remain here a little longer, and see what is to happen at Brighton. I am grieved beyond words at the place; being one of the oldest inhabitants, I cannot bear to see it in the state it is in now."

"BRIGHTON, *November* 21, 1831.[2]

"The King has no will or power of his own. Lord Grey governs everything. I confess I am of Munster's opinion, that an evil hour is near approaching. I think a revolution is very soon at hand, if not already begun.[3] . . . The Queen has been very ill, and has been confined to her room for the last fortnight. To-day she dines with us for the first time. I dined yesterday at the Pavilion, forty in number. Lord Brougham[4]

1 William George, seventeenth Earl of Erroll. He had married, 1820, Lady Elizabeth Fitzclarence, daughter of William IV.

2 Mrs. Fitzherbert went to Brighton on November 19.

3 She was not alone in this opinion. The Duke of Wellington and other Tory leaders expressed similar views. The Queen was convinced that a revolution was imminent, and even the King wrote to Lord Grey, "*The times are awful.*"

4 Henry, first Lord Brougham, then Lord Chancellor. He conducted the defence of Queen Caroline. His views on the subject of Mrs. Fitzherbert's marriage to George IV. have already been explained.

was one of the party, so what you have heard about the King's not being allowed to give dinners is not true The King is ordered up to London to-morrow to arrange something the Ministers want him to do"

Mrs Fitzherbert spent Christmas and the New Year at Brighton, the Damers and the Jerningham came to stay with her, and she dined frequently at the Pavilion, but she gave no parties this year, in truth there was very little entertaining anywhere The country was still in a most disturbed state, and to add to the general misery and confusion, England was visited for the first time by the Asiatic cholera The Whig Government held its own, and in March 1832 the Reform Bill again passed through the House of Commons The Lords now showed a disposition to yield, but they hoped to mutilate the Bill in committee Lord Grey was determined that the Bill should not be seriously altered, and he proposed that the King should create a sufficient number of peers to insure its passing the House of Lords The King demurred to this drastic measure, and through a court intrigue the Ministers offered their resignations, which were accepted by the King, who sent for the Duke of Wellington

Mrs Fitzherbert to the Hon Mrs Dawson Damer, Paris

' TILNEY STREET *May* 11, 1832

"The King has refused to make more peers Everybody is going down to the Commons to see

what is to be done. The Master of the Rolls says all is over, but I still have hopes. The Grey party say they cannot form an Administration; the Opposition must come in. If this is the case I hope Peel will come in, but I doubt whether the Duke will accept.[1] I hope the King will be staunch about the peerage. Lord Grey says that he must have peers, or a paper signed that the Opposition will not go against the Bill. God knows what will be done, but from what I have heard the Opposition are annoyed at the resignation of the Ministry, none of them wishing to replace them in the state the country has been put into. No one has yet been appointed, but members are named. The confusion is very great, particularly as cards of invitation from the Ministers for the great dinners on the Birthday were issued, which must now be put aside. The Duke of Wellington's ball is to take place. Very properly, he invited all the Ministers and their wives to meet the King, a very comical proceeding under the circumstances."

"TILNEY STREET, *May* 15, 1832.

"I wish this odious Reform Bill was over one way or another. Everybody is worn out with it. After having sent three excuses to the Palace, not being very well, I felt bound not to send a fourth, and I dined there on Sunday, and really had a very pleasant party. The King was in great force, and all the rest in high good-humour; many inquiries after 'Minney,' for none of them call you by any

1 Her forecast was quite wrong. The Duke made the attempt to form an Administration, but Peel refused to have anything to do with it.

other name. . . . God bless you, Dearest; tell the dear children that I am delighted at their praying for me. I am sure it will do me good."

The King was compelled to yield to circumstances. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst tried in vain to form an Administration. The King then recalled Lord Grey, and agreed to create the number of peers necessary to carry the Bill, calling first up to the House of Lords peers' eldest sons. This extreme measure, however, proved unnecessary, for the Duke of Wellington and about a hundred Tory peers absented themselves under protest. The Reform Bill was carried through the House of Lords, and received the royal assent June 1, 1832. Its passing into law may be regarded as coincident with the passing of the Georgian Era.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BURNING OF THE LETTERS

(1833)

Early in 1833 the Duke of Wellington revived the question of the correspondence between George IV. and Mrs. Fitzherbert, which had lain in abeyance since the settlement of her annuity after the late King's death. The Duke had not pressed the matter at the time, because of the evident reluctance of Mrs. Fitzherbert to enter into any discussion on the subject, and the desire of William IV. to meet her wishes in this as in all things. Soon after followed the Duke's resignation of office, and then came the agitation over the Reform Bill, which had absorbed the Duke's energies for the last two years. Now, however, that the Reform Bill had passed into law, and the Whigs had a majority in Parliament so overwhelming that it seemed likely the Tories would be out of power for a generation, the Duke had leisure to turn his attention to other affairs, and the first matter to claim his attention was the disposition of these papers. As executor of the late King he had a great number of Mrs. Fitzherbert's letters to George IV.; he knew she had preserved the late King's letters, and that she also had many other documents of an important nature; he felt that a settlement of the matter should no longer

be delayed Mrs Fitzherbert was now in her seventy-seventh year, and through the winter of 1832–33 her health had been failing; she might die at any moment, no one quite knew to whom she would leave her property, and these important and secret papers might fall into the hands of persons who would make indiscreet use of them After the late King's death she had asked that her letters to him should be returned to her, she feared that some of them had fallen into the hands of Sir William Knighton The Duke on his side said he could not give them up to her unless she was prepared to hand over all the documents in her possession which related to George IV Mrs Fitzherbert demurred, on the ground that she wished to retain such papers as she deemed necessary for the vindication of her honour at some future time, and so the matter dropped

The Duke now revived it, he had a talk with Mrs Dawson Damer on the subject, whom he met frequently in London He told her he had a proposal to make to Mrs Fitzherbert concerning these papers, and asked her to find out when it would be agreeable for Mrs Fitzherbert to discuss the matter with him Mrs Dawson Damer wrote to Mrs Fitzherbert, who was then at Brighton, and told her what the Duke said In reply Mrs Fitzherbert wrote —

"BRIGHTON, *March* 3 1833

"Many thanks, dear Minney, for your letter this morning The account you give of your conversation with the Duke of Wellington makes me rather

nervous, and I should really feel more obliged to you than I can express if you would desire him not to send me the papers he alludes to. I had rather defer their perusal till I go to town, which I shall do very soon. Pray express my thanks to him; he has always upon this subject shown much feeling and good nature to me. I am not very well, and anything upon *the* subject always annoys me very much."

On March 14, Mrs. Fitzherbert came up to London from Brighton. She then saw the Duke, and without pledging herself to any definite proposal, she agreed to appoint trustees who would act for her in the matter. She stipulated also that, before she could do anything in the business, the Duke on his part must promise that all her letters to George IV. should be given up, and that Knighton should not be allowed to retain any one of them. The Duke assured her that this should be done. She also reiterated her determination to retain such documents as she deemed necessary to prove the fact of her marriage. To this the Duke agreed conditionally. After some deliberation Mrs. Fitzherbert then asked Lord Albemarle[1] and Lord Stourton[2] to act for her in this matter, and they expressed themselves willing. Lord Albemarle was an old and trusted friend, and Lord Stourton was her second cousin, a Roman Catholic, and thus allied to her by ties of blood and religion. To

[1] The fourth Earl of Albemarle (1772–1849). He had married a daughter of Mrs. Fitzherbert's great friend, Lady de Clifford.

[2] The seventeenth Lord Stourton, whose mother (*née* the Hon. Mary Langdale) was Mrs. Fitzherbert's first cousin.

Lord Albemarle she left the negotiation of the business with the Duke of Wellington. These negotiations took some time. Mrs. Fitzherbert went down to Brighton for Easter, came back to London in May, and remained there until everything was settled. The chief difficulty arose over the papers which Mrs. Fitzherbert wished to keep. The Duke of Wellington would have preferred that everything should be destroyed, but Mrs. Fitzherbert was determined that these should be preserved. Appeal was made to William IV., who overruled the Duke, and in the end a compromise was arrived at. Mrs. Fitzherbert was to preserve such papers as she deemed necessary to prove her marriage and guard her interests, but these papers were to be placed in the safe custody of Coutts's Bank under certain conditions; what these conditions were the following will show:—

The Earl of Albemarle to Lord Stourton.

"THE STUD HOUSE, *August* 10, 1833.

"DEAR LORD STOURTON,—I have much pleasure in informing you, that our business is drawing towards a satisfactory termination. After two interviews with the Duke of Wellington, we have agreed, subject to your approbation, to the proposed terms, which I direct to you under another cover. Mrs. Fitzherbert is, I believe, *perfectly* satisfied. I have had the honour of submitting to the King a full statement of the *whole case*, and his Majesty *gives his cordial sanction* to the proposed arrangement. It, however, waits for

your approval; and should anything occur t
as neglected, or incautiously guarded, hav
goodness to let me know. The Duke of
lington takes it upon his own responsibilit
Sir William Knighton shall retain no
whatever, and the word *knowledge* in the pı
does not mean any restraint over our disp
of the papers retained, but merely that the
party shall not be taken by surprise b
publication of them without notice. I thi
word useless to be inserted, but of no conse

"I have been commanded by the K
invite Mrs. Fitzherbert to dine with h
Saturday, the 24th, and also your Lords
meet her on that day, should it happen y
in London. Believe me, dear Lord St
sincerely yours,

"ALBEM.

"Correct Copy.—STOURTON."

[*Inclosure.*]

"It is agreed by Mrs. Fitzherbert on t
part, and the executors of the late King
other, that each will destroy all pape
documents (with the exception of those he
mentioned) in the possession of either, sig
written by Mrs. Fitzherbert, or by her dire
or signed or written by the late
Prince of Wales, or King of Great
or by his command. The two
in any case any papers signed or
of the parties above mentioned,

the papers of the other, they shall be given up as the property of the writer or signer thereof, or of the person who authorised the writing or signature thereof. Such papers and documents as Mrs. Fitzherbert shall wish to keep, shall be sealed up in a cover under the seals of the Duke of Wellington and Sir William Knighton, and of the Earl of Albemarle and Lord Stourton, and be lodged in the bank of Messrs. Coutts, at the disposition of the Earl of Albemarle and of Lord Stourton. The seals not to be broken without the knowledge of the Duke of Wellington and Sir William Knighton. It is understood that no copy of any paper or document is to be taken or kept on either side."

Here follows a list of the papers and documents retained by Mrs. Fitzherbert:—

1. The Mortgage on the Palace at Brighton.
2. The Certificate of the Marriage, dated December 21 (*sic*), 1785.
3. Letter from the late King, relating to the Marriage, signed (George IV.).
4. Will written by the late King (George IV.).
5. Memorandum written by Mrs. Fitzherbert, attached to a letter written by the clergyman who performed the Marriage Ceremony.

Correct copy.—STOURTON.

An exact copy. Witness my hand,

STOURTON.[1]

[1] Langdale's "Memoirs," pp 84-87.

Lord Stourton to the Earl of Albemarle.

"I entirely concur in the proposal transmitted to me by the Earl of Albemarle, and give my sanction to any mode that Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lord Albemarle may deem expedient for carrying it into effect. I will affix my seal to the parcel containing the reserved documents on my return to town, and I now authorise the Earl of Albemarle, with the concurrence of Mrs. Fitzherbert, to destroy the rest. I would only observe, that 'the *knowledge*' of the Duke of Wellington and Sir William Knighton, Bart., is not understood to make them of necessity *consenting parties* to the inspection of the reserved papers to be deposited at Coutts's Banking-house. . . ."[1]

On August 24, 1833, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Albemarle met by appointment in the drawing-room of Mrs. Fitzherbert's house in Tilney Street.[2] The Duke brought with him all Mrs. Fitzherbert's letters to George IV., and she on her side produced all the late King's letters to her, with the exception of the papers which it had been agreed that she should preserve. She had written a list of them (the list already specified), and had made them up in a closed packet, to which the Duke of Wellington and Lord Albemarle then affixed their signatures and seals. Mrs. Fitzherbert went through the papers brought by the Duke, and satisfied herself that all her letters to the King were among

[1] Langdale's "Memoirs," p. 88.

[2] Lord Stourton was ill in the country and could not attend. Sir William Knighton, Mrs. Fitzherbert declined to meet.

them, especially those which she feared had fallen into the hands of Sir William Knighton. She then retired, and left the work of the burning of the papers to be carried out by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Albemarle. This took a long time.

The sixth Earl of Albemarle writes in his memoirs: "Some idea of the mass of manuscripts committed to the flames may be formed by an expression of the Duke to my father after several hours' burning: 'I think, my Lord, we had better hold our hand for a while, or we shall set the old woman's chimney on fire.'"[1] The chimney *was* nearly set on fire, and a smoke stain on the white marble mantel-piece, which may still be seen in the drawing-room of the house in Tilney Street, is said to have been caused by the conflagration. Mrs. Fitzherbert afterwards told Mrs. Damer that "the room smelt of burnt paper and sealing-wax for weeks afterwards."

Directly the burning was over, the same day, Lord Albemarle went down to Coutts's Bank and deposited the packet. He writes the next day to Lord Stourton:—

The Earl of Albemarle to Lord Stourton.

"THE STUD HOUSE [HAMPTON COURT],
August 25 [1833]

"DEAR LORD STOURTON,—The difficulty of finding the Duke of Wellington unengaged, and that alone, has caused the delay.

"I am happy in being able to inform you, that

[1] "Fifty Years of my Life," by George Thomas, Earl . London, 1876.

the business is now completely arranged, and, I believe I may add, to the satisfaction of all parties. Yesterday, the Duke of Wellington, Mrs. Fitzherbert, and myself, were busily engaged in burning all the letters on either side, with the exception of those which Mrs. Fitzherbert chose to keep. It would be unjust to the Duke of Wellington, if I did not say that his conduct was gentlemanly and friendly to Mrs. Fitzherbert in every respect, and I know that she is perfectly satisfied.

"After our great work of burning was over, I went to Messrs. Coutts's, and delivered into Mr. Dickie's[1] hands (by Mrs. Fitzherbert's desire) the parcel containing the documents and letters reserved, signed and sealed by the Duke of Wellington and myself. Whenever your Lordship returns to London you will have the goodness to add your name and seal.

"It is satisfactory to me to add, that amongst the papers brought and destroyed by the Duke of Wellington, were the letters which Mrs. Fitzherbert had missed, and which she supposed to have been obtained by Sir William Knighton, and kept by him. I believe the letters were of no consequence, but I clearly saw that this circumstance was an additional relief to Mrs. Fitzherbert's mind. I am sure we both cordially agree in the hope, and I trust I may add in the confidence, that her anxiety on this most delicate subject may now be entirely set at rest. She expresses most

[1] Mr. Dickie was the clerk who for years superintended George IV.'s banking account. No doubt he performed a similar office for Mrs. Fitzherbert.

feelingly her gratitude to your Lordship for your useful and zealous assistance. Believe me, dear Lord Stourton, sincerely yours,

"ALBEMARLE."

In reply Lord Stourton wrote:—

"I think Mrs. Fitzherbert retains everything essential to the protection of her character and property, and it must be a solid consolation that his Majesty has been graciously pleased to interest himself in and to sanction an arrangement which, while it protects the parties, shelters them from unnecessary publicity."[1]

So the matter rested. Mrs. Fitzherbert had placed these documents in safe keeping for a specific purpose, namely the vindication of her character at some future time. When and how that was to be accomplished she had not yet determined, but she had reserved the right to withdraw her papers from Coutts's Bank when she should think fit. It was a great relief to her mind that the matter was so far settled, for the agitation and anxiety occasioned by the controversy over her papers had made her very unwell; she broke down completely, and for nearly five weeks was unable to leave her room. She wrote to Lord Stourton excusing herself from seeing him on that account, and added:—

"I long to talk it [the matter of the papers] over with you whenever it pleases God that I may again have the happiness of seeing you. My medical advisers tell me that the best chance I have is to go

[1] Langdale's "Memoirs," pp. 89–90.

into another climate, and I propose setting out in a day or two for Aix-la-Chapelle. My mind being more at ease, I trust I may enjoy a little better health than I have done. I cannot expect at my time of life to be free of all ailments, and I must submit, and be thankful for the many kind friends I have met with, who support me in all my difficulties. To none do I feel more indebted than to yourself."[1]

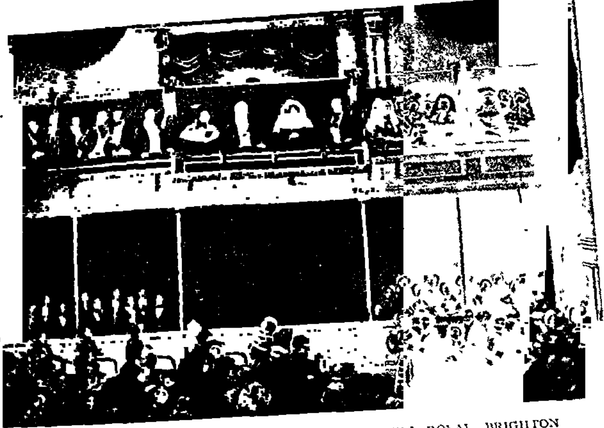
Mrs. Fitzherbert went to Aix-la-Chapelle in October, and the waters did her so much good that she determined to return there in the spring. Her affairs were now settled, and she had nothing to call her back to England, so she arranged to winter in Paris. She lent her house at Brighton to her friend, Lady Downshire, and she took an apartment in Paris near the Damers, who were then residing there. At that time there was a considerable English element in fashionable Parisian society, and several English noble families went there every year for a lengthy sojourn. This was partly due to the English tastes of King Louis Philippe. Mrs. Fitzherbert had many friends in Paris, both French and English, and her stay there was made pleasant for her by the King and Queen. She writes:—

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Lord Stourton.

"PARIS, *December* 7, 1833.

". . . I have taken a very quiet apartment, and live very retired, seeing occasionally some friends.

[1] Mrs. Fitzherbert to Lord Stourton; undated [end of September 1833]. Langdale's "Memoirs," p. 107.



WILLIAM IV. ATTENDING DIVINE SERVICE IN THE CHAPEL ROYAL, BRIGHTON

The other Royal Personages present are Queen Adelaide, Princess Augusta, and Prince George of Cambridge

The Duke of Orleans came to see me the moment I arrived, with a thousand kind messages from the King and Queen, desiring me to go to them, which I accordingly have done. Nothing could exceed the kindness of their reception of me: they are both old acquaintances of mine. I have declined all their *fêtes*, and they have given me a general invitation to go there every evening whenever I like it, in a quiet family way, which suits me very much. I really think I never saw a more amiable family: so happy and so united. The King seems worn to death with business all day and all night; but he assured me that things were going on much better, though there were a great many wicked people trying to make mischief. I told him that I was afraid he had sent many of them to make disturbances in our country.[1] He is very much attached to England, and hopes we shall always be friends."[2]

Mrs. Fitzherbert was not forgotten by her friends in England while she was abroad, as the following letter will show:—

H.R.H. the Princess Augusta[3] *to Mrs. Fitzherbert.*

"BRIGHTON, *January* 1, 1834

"It was but yesterday, my dearest Mrs Fitzherbert, that I was talking of you, and saying how

[1] Some of the French *emigrés* who came to England at this time were very undesirable, and the Alien Act had to be put into force

[2] Mrs Fitzherbert to Lord Stourton. Langdale's "Memoirs," pp 109, 110

[3] The Princess Augusta . of George III (1768–1840) This

[illegible] and his
[illegible] your

[illegible] thank God you
[illegible] your health.
[illegible] away, and
[illegible] otherwise we all
[illegible] the [the Pavilion].
[illegible] particu-
[illegible] are so extra-
[illegible] to give you
[illegible]ams and the
[illegible] much obliged
[illegible] beg you to be
[illegible] affection for
[illegible] confined to the
[illegible] bad cold. Sir
[illegible] was at
[illegible] out.

"Accept my kindest wishes for your health, and that you may return to England in the Spring, when none of your friends will be happier to see you than, my dearest Mrs Fitzherbert, your very sincere and attached friend,

"AUGUSTA."

While Mrs. Fitzherbert was in Paris she became much interested in a Mademoiselle Nisot, a young French lady of good family, but very poor, who supported herself by giving singing lessons. Mrs. Fitzherbert was anxious to help her, but she did not know how to do so without wounding her *amour propre*. So we find this old lady of seventy-eight proposing that she should take singing lessons from her *protégée*. The letter in which she proposes this shows her impulsive kindness of heart, and her delicate consideration for the feelings of the young girl whom she wishes to aid.

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Mademoiselle Nisot.[1]

"PARIS, *May* —, 1834.

"DEAR MADEMOISELLE,—I hope you got home safely, and that your cold is no worse. Though slight, it has troubled *me* because of the trouble it causes *you*. Do not wonder when I tell you my anxiety arises from the interest I take in you.

[1] This letter was lent me by Dr Chepmell, sometime physician to the Empress Eugénie, who attended Mdlle. Nisot in her old age, and to whom she gave this letter It is written in French, of which I give a translation Mdlle Nisot at one time gave singing lessons to the Empress Eugénie

Perhaps you will think me very *bold* (*bien hardie*) to tell you this so soon, perhaps you will disbelieve me, but there is a charm about you I cannot define, and it interests me in you not as an acquaintance of a few days only, but as one whom I have known and liked for a long time. You will say, or you will *think*, that it is my character to be like this, but you will be mistaken. I am, on the contrary, very slow in attaching myself to people, and I have rarely met in life any one who arouses my sympathy as you do.

"I hope, therefore, on my return from the Waters [Aix-la-Chapelle] that I shall see you sometimes, when you can spare yourself from the society of those friends who have claims on your friendship. In any case I shall have the pleasure of seeing you, for I wish, *really*, to become *your pupil*, and I shall win your kindness to me, by the pains which I shall take to save you trouble. Perhaps you could arrange to fix a time a little later than nine o'clock in the morning, for though I wish to do everything to suit your convenience, I could not promise often to take a lesson at that hour. Though I appear to be in perfect health, I am, alas! often, and even *very* often, a great sufferer. At such times I sleep very badly; sometimes it is only towards six o'clock in the morning that I fall asleep for two or three hours, and it is a fixed rule that I am not to be awakened until I ring, or, to express myself more clearly, it is by my doctors' orders, because otherwise my nerves suffer.

"I am looking forward to *Le Pré aux Clercs*, and if my friend does not give me the same places

in the *loge* as I had yesterday, I will take tickets, and so give myself the pleasure of enabling you to hear that divine opera as a little remembrance of me. I am sending you some currant-and-raspberry syrup to soothe your cough, and shall be only too happy if I can *cure* it. In return I remind you of your promise to let me hear your sweet voice when you are well again.

"Believe me to remain, with kindest regards, yours,

"M. FITZHERBERT."

A further interesting reminiscence of Mrs. Fitzherbert's sojourn in Paris has been told me by the Dowager Countess Manvers, who now resides at No. 6 Tilney Street—Mrs. Fitzherbert's old house. Lady Manvers told me recently: "I remember seeing Mrs. Fitzherbert in Paris in the thirties. She came to call on my mother, the Duchesse de Coligny, to whom she talked much about the Orleans princes and princesses, whom they both knew very well. I remember her as being a very pretty old lady, with a bright, animated manner. She shook hands with me and I made my *révérence*. I don't remember any more than that, for in those days children were sent out of the room by their elders."

Mrs. Fitzherbert stayed in Paris until June, and then made another visit to Aix-la-Chapelle. She again derived great benefit from the waters, and wrote that she was "wonderfully better." She determined to go to Spa and then to Brussels before returning to Paris.

Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Hon. Mrs. Dawson Damer.

"SPA, *August* 12, 1834.

"I left Aix on the 4th and arrived safely here. I find this place in every respect so much better that I should not have known it again had I not been told it was Spa. I was delighted to quit Aix; the violent heat and stench of the town were dreadful, besides tremendous storms of thunder and lightning which we had every day. The air of this place to me is quite refreshing, and I mean to stay till the end of the week and then proceed to Brussels for a few days. I am at the Hôtel de Flandres, very good, and if George were here, even *he* would not be able to find fault with the living. It is much better than any I have had since I left the Hôtel Bristol.

"*P.S.*—August 12. A melancholy and memorable recollection."[1]

"AIX-LA-CHAPELLE, *August* 22, 1834.

"You will be surprised, my dear Minney, to receive a letter from me at this place, but I have returned here to take a few more draughts of the water. I meant to proceed from Spa to Brussels, but was overcome by the intense heat of the weather, and for three or four days not able to move, so that it took away all the advantages received during my stay here. I saw Dr. Newbolt, whom you must remember last autumn at Brussels, and who is a sensible person; he de-

[1] George IV.'s birthday.

sired me to return again here, and hoped that a week or ten days would restore me, and remove the debility the heat of the weather had occasioned. I have followed his advice with great reluctance, but I really was not able to proceed on my journey, and as I was near Aix I thought I had better agree to his proposal. I am drinking away as fast as I can, but I have not attempted bathing, which certainly did not agree with me, but the waters have, and I hope now will have their usual good effect upon me, for really when I went to Spa I was wonderfully well. I was so surprised the other evening, when my door opened, to see George's brother[1] make his appearance. I really thought at first it was himself, they are so much alike. He dined with me; he is gone with a party into the country to-day, but returns to-morrow, when I hope he will eat his soup with me.

"I could not get the house I had before, it was engaged, and Dremel has behaved so ill to me I would not return to him. When we meet I will tell you all about it. I am in a very good lodging opposite the Rédout—very civil people, and I am very comfortable, but I hate this place so much that nothing but absolute necessity should have brought me here again. . . . I wish I could make myself some years younger and my health better; I should then have much pleasure in joining you anywhere you and George might propose, but alas! *mes beaux jours sont passés*, and I must make up my mind to my arm-chair and my fireside. I am not fit for anything else."

[1] This must have been the Hon. Lionel Charles Dawson-Damer, fourth son of the first Earl of Portarlington, younger brother of Colonel Dawson Damer.

CHAPTER XV

REST

(1834–1837)

Mrs. Fitzherbert returned to England in September, after nearly a year's absence. She went from Aix-la-Chapelle to Paris, and after staying there a few days travelled by way of Calais-Dover to London—a long and fatiguing journey for an old lady of seventy-eight, when we remember at that time railways were unknown. But she seemed none the worse for it, for she writes:—

To Colonel the Hon. George Dawson Damer, Versailles.

"Tilney Street, *September* 30, 1834.

"Many thanks, my dear George, for your letter, which I received two days ago. I have suffered so much from the climate since I came here ten days since that it makes me quite ill; the constant damp and fogs annoy me beyond anything; it is impossible to see even the Park wall out of my windows, and I am quite suffocated. To-morrow I take my departure, and heartily glad shall I be to turn my back on the odious town. I am going for a few days to Brighton, and thence to the

Bathursts,[1] and to the Cravens,[2] who are quite established at Brambridge. London is empty, and the few people I have seen are all in a fright at the state of affairs. I don't wonder at it, for I fear this country is in a sad state. The King came to town two days after my arrival, and sent to me to go to him, but it so happened I had neither carriages nor horses. Lord Albemarle was ordered to send one of his Majesty's carriages, and of course I went. Nothing could equal his kind, and I must say, affectionate reception of me, and after I had passed some time with him he said, 'I have had something made for you, but I did not want to send it to you whilst you remained on the Continent.' Then he produced a pair of very handsome diamond bracelets. The value was nothing to me, but the kind manner that accompanied it was very flattering. I have shown them to everybody as the first and only present he ever gave me.

"I wrote to Minney the day after I arrived here, to tell her what a fortunate voyage I had across the water. I enclose a note for dear little Blanche, for I have had so much to do, I have never had *time* to write to her, and I know, having sent a letter to little Minney,[3] I shall be in disgrace if I don't do the same to her. You will hear all that is going on here better from the English now at Paris than I

[1] Sir Frederick Hervey Bathurst, Bart., had married Mrs. Fitzherbert's niece, Louisa Mary, elder daughter of the late Mr. Walter Smythe.

[2] The Hon. George Augustus Craven had married Mrs. Fitzherbert's niece Charlotte Georgiana Harriett, younger daughter of the late Mr. Walter Smythe. They lived at Brambridge, Mrs. Fitzherbert's old home. Mr. Craven died in 1836.

[3] The late Countess Fortescue.

can inform you. I will therefore bid you farewell, with a thousand kind loves to dear Minney. Ever affectionately yours,

"M. F.-H."

Mrs. Fitzherbert went down to Brighton in October, where, except for a short visit which she paid to her niece Lady Bathurst, she remained until April 1835. She continued in good health throughout the winter. The only letter we find worth quoting during this period is one she wrote to Colonel Damer; it shows that her keen interest in politics was unabated. She enclosed a copy of Peel's famous address to the electors of Tamworth, in which he said, "I consider the Reform Bill to be a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question—a settlement which no friend to the peace and welfare of this country would attempt to disturb either by direct or insidious means." Mrs. Fitzherbert wrote, December 16, 1834: "I cannot resist sending you the enclosed, which in my humble opinion is one of the cleverest productions ever written. I hope you will be as much delighted with it as everybody here is. The Whigs are outrageous, and call Peel's address all hypocrisy."

In acknowledging its receipt, Colonel Damer wrote: "On Monday night we were summoned to pay our court to the King and Queen (Louis XVIII. and Queen Amélie). They both asked most kindly after you, and expressed a wish to see you in the spring."

But Mrs. Fitzherbert did not go abroad again.

She was at her house in Tilney Street during most of the London season (1835), when she gave dinner parties to her friends, she no longer gave any other form of entertainment Raikes writes of her "She kept a very handsome establishment in Tilney Street and Brighton, where the best society was always seen, every one without formality evincing that *nuance* of respect which tacitly acknowledged her elevated position, while the service of plate and handsome dinners, and a numerous train of servants, all grown old in her service, gave the house at least a *seigneurial*, if not a royal appearance"[1]

The following note to Mrs Fitzherbert from the Princess Augusta, interesting because of its mention of our late Queen, was written at this time —

"*May* 23, 1833.

"MY DEAR MRS FITZHERBERT,—I shall be very glad to see you to morrow, if you will be at the Palace at four o'clock I cannot name an earlier hour, as I go to Kensington to see Victoria, whose birthday it is, and at five the King and Queen dine with me, for the ball given to the children begins at eight I am very sorry to hear you have been ill, and trust that the Brighton air will restore your health Not one of your friends is more attached to you than your faithful

"AUGUSTA."

Mrs Fitzherbert dined several times at St. James's with the King and Queen who as usual

[1] Raikes' "Journal

[2] The Princess Victoria, daughter of the Duke of Kent, born May 24, 1819

showed her great kindness and attention. Lady Georgiana Grey, writing to Mrs. Damer, mentions meeting her at one of these dinners. She says, "Mrs. Fitzherbert was at St. James's last night, looking beautiful, and young as ever." Indeed, her good looks and vivacity were a source of general comment. Mrs. Damer, writing from Baden (April 23, 1835), said that she had met Count Charles de Morny, the French Minister. "He inquired very attentively after you, dearest Mamma, and said that no one he met in England had made the impression of being *grande dame* half as much as yourself." Mr. Charles Weld Blundell says that his great-uncle, Mr. Charles Langdale, told him "that though she still showed in his day great beauty and charm, her wit and high spirits were her chief attractions, and often used to surround her with eager listeners at nearly eighty."

Mrs. Fitzherbert spent Christmas at Brighton as usual. She continued fairly well, but she was no longer able to bear much fatigue, consequently she made Brighton her head-quarters throughout the year 1836, and only went to London on brief visits. Brighton, especially in the summer, suited her better than any other place, and she had a great many interests there in connection with her Church and her charities which she had not elsewhere. There are still living a few people at Brighton who remember her during these last years of her life, and who can recall her as she drove out in her carriage every afternoon, with her servants in the royal liveries. One who

remembers her well[1] has told me the following reminiscence:—

"It was between the years 1832–36 that I used to do *little upholstery* work for Mrs. Fitzherbert at Steine House. I was then a young man of twenty odd. During that time she was often not in good health, so that, though I was there many times, I never but once had any conversation with her. One morning she sent for me, and asked me to help her rearrange some silhouettes on the walls of her room. There were hundreds of them, representing her many friends, including, it is scarcely necessary to say, some of the most distinguished personages of the century, and many were signed. They covered the walls of her room. For some time I worked at them, Mrs. Fitzherbert telling me where to place them. Every now and then she interrupted the work to ask me some questions about myself, how I liked my calling, &c. She spoke in a low, sweet voice, and every word was very distinctly uttered. I remember that she was wearing a black silk dress, and a little shawl, but not widow's weeds. She was very pale, in fact her face was as colourless as wax, which made her bright, dark eyes seem all the brighter by contrast. Though old time, sorrow, and ill-treatment had written deep furrows on her face, still one could see the remains of a beautiful woman. She seemed happy, even cheerful, but except

[1] Mr. William Saunders, now living at 3 Downs View, Culverdon Down, Tunbridge Wells, aged 94, whom I went to see on April 7, 1903, when he gave me the above interesting reminiscence Mr. Saunders was perfectly hale and hearty, and was reading a book of Huxley's (without spectacles) the afternoon I called on him

when her face was lit up with her sweet smile, she wore a look of settled sadness. After about an hour, I should think, she said, 'I feel tired, I must leave you to finish them by yourself,' and went away. This was the only time I saw her to speak to, though I often saw her driving, and I was often in the house again. I remember her drawing-room on the first floor. The furniture was old fashioned and very good, but some of it was threadbare. I remember especially an ottoman covered with needlework (done by Mrs. Fitzherbert herself, the maid said) some two feet long, a bunch of roses on a maroon-coloured ground. I have repaired furniture in her bedroom too, a large room, and two sides of the room were hung with silhouettes.

"Whenever I saw Mrs. Fitzherbert after that morning when she talked to me, she always greeted me with a sweet smile of recognition which made me feel very proud. I venerated her for the kind, though dignified, manner in which she could speak to a young working-man as well as to a prince. Her servants were devoted to her, and some of them were very old. Her carriage with its splendid horses, and scarlet-liveried servants, flashing along the Steine was a familiar sight to all Brighton when I was a young man. Mrs. Fitzherbert was very benevolent and charitable to Protestants and Catholics alike."[1]

[1] Though not strictly germane to the subject, I may quote here some further reminiscences of Mr. Saunders which he told at the same time. They are those of a man who has lived in five reigns. "I remember," he said, "the festivities in Brighton for the Coronation of George IV. in 1821. I remember the bonfires on the Level, and I

stantly with my eldest sister to the house on the Steine. Mrs. Fitzherbert was very fond of us children, and liked having us with her. She always prepared little treats and pleasures for us, and we looked forward greatly to these visits to 'Granny,' as we used to call her. I well remember what a beautiful old lady she was, with brilliant dark eyes, and a bright and charming manner."

The King and Queen came to spend Christmas and the New Year at Brighton. On December 22, 1836, Mrs. Fitzherbert dined with them at the Pavilion for the last time. She had to decline their invitation for Christmas Day, as she was no longer able to go out in the evening. She continued to receive many marks of kindness from the royal family. The good old King came to see her and wish her a happy New Year. He, too, was broken in health, and it was evident to all, himself included, that he had not long to live. Several old friends came to see Mrs. Fitzherbert at this time, including Sir Henry Halford, and Colonel Gurwood, who had promised to act as one of her executors. On leaving her Colonel Gurwood went to the Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsaye. He wrote to her from there (January 16, 1827) a letter in which he said: "The Duke has asked after you, and what you had said of Sir William Knighton's death.[1] I replied that I had mentioned to you that he, the Duke, had a very high opinion of Knighton, upon which you remarked, 'I pity him then.' I thought he never would have ceased laughing."

[1] Sir William Knighton died in 1836.



Mrs Fitzherbert continued to keep up a brisk correspondence with her friends One of her last letters was to Lady Cecilia Buggin (wife of the Duke of Sussex)[1] inquiring after the Duke, who had been ill with influenza Lady Cecilia replied from Kensington Palace (February 15, 1837), and after narrating the Duke's illness, said "I told him of your kind inquiries He desires me to thank you and give you his love, and say how sorry he is that you have been ill, and we both trust that you will take care of yourself and escape this horrid complaint, which seems to spare nobody I believe the best way is to remain within doors, and I am sure the advice given to you to do so is the best and the only sure way to avoid it"

Unfortunately, Mrs Fitzherbert did not follow this advice One bright morning in March she was tempted by the sunshine to go out for a drive, heedless of the fact that a keen east wind was blowing—and the east wind is nowhere keener than at Brighton The following day she complained of feeling unwell The doctors at first thought she was suffering from a slight chill, but within a few days she developed symptoms of a severe attack of influenza Colonel and Mrs Damer, who were in London, hurried down to Brighton All that medical skill and devoted care could do was done, but Mrs Fitzherbert grew worse, her malady being complicated by great difficulty of breathing Mrs Damer wrote to Sir Henry Halford, and the great physician posted down from London to attend the sick bed of his old friend But

[1] Later created by Queen Victoria Duchess of Inverness

when he came he saw that little could be done to alleviate her sufferings; the end was near. On Saturday, March 25, it was not expected that she would live through the day, and her domestic chaplain, Father Lopez, administered to her the last rites of the Church. The priest was praying by the bedside when Mrs. Damer's little girls were brought in to take their last farewell of "Granny"—Mrs. Fitzherbert had expressed a wish to see the children. One of them has given me the following account of this sad scene:—

"One day we children were told that Granny, as we always called her, was very ill, and our parents took us into the room where she lay dying. The priest was saying the last prayers over her, the words of which were much the same as that of Newman's beautiful poem, 'The Dream of Gerontius,' and they made such an impression on my mind that I have never forgotten them."[1]

Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!
Go from this world! Go in the Name of God
The omnipotent Father, Who created thee!
Go in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Son of the Living God, Who bled for thee.
Go in the Name of the Holy Spirit, Who
Hath been poured out on thee! Go in the name
Of Angels and Archangels; in the name
Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name
Of Princedoms and Powers; and in the name
Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth!

Mrs. Fitzherbert lingered over Sunday, her strong constitution fighting for her to the last. In several of the churches of Brighton, not only those

[1] *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo, &c.*

of her own faith, she was prayed for. Monday found her in a semi-conscious state. It was a rough, windy day (one has told me), broken by fitful gleams of sunshine, and the watchers by the dying woman's bed could hear the roar of the big waves as they broke along the beach. Thus the day wore on, Mrs. Fitzherbert growing weaker every hour. Towards evening, when the tide was ebbing and all the light had faded off the sea, "God's finger touched her and she slept."

Mrs. Fitzherbert died on Monday, March 27, 1837, at seven o'clock in the evening, in the eighty-second year of her age. Born in the reign of George II., she died within three months of the accession of Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER XVI

IN MEMORIAM

(1837)

MRS. FITZHERBERT'S body lay in state for some days at her house in Brighton. A room on the ground floor was transformed into a *chapelle ardente*, under the direction of her chaplain, Father Lopez. The coffin was of English oak, and bore a plate with the following inscription :—

MARIA FITZHERBERT.
Born 26th July, 1756.
Died 27th March, 1837.
Requiescat in pace.
Amen.

The coffin was covered with a crimson velvet pall, and was placed on a bier in the centre of the room. A loving hand had laid on it a few white roses. Daylight was excluded from the chamber, and the walls were hung with black and purple. Tall wax tapers burned on either side of the bier, and a small temporary altar had been erected, on which stood a crucifix. The body was watched night and day by nuns from a community which Mrs. Fitzherbert had helped to establish in Brighton. Many friends

of the deceased lady, many townsmen of Brighton, rich and poor, visited the *chapelle ardente*.[1]

Mrs. Fitzherbert had desired that her funeral should be as simple as possible, and that she should be buried in a vault in the Roman Catholic church of St. John the Baptist, at Brighton, a church which she had largely helped to build. Her wishes were carried out to the letter. The funeral took place on Thursday, April 4, 1837—the Thursday in Easter week. It was a bright spring day, the trees on the Steine were bursting into bud, and all Nature was waking from its long sleep. The whole town seemed to have gone into mourning, and immense crowds collected on the Steine, for the deceased lady had endeared herself to all classes of people. At ten o'clock in the morning the funeral cortège left Steine House, and proceeded at a walking pace up the Marine Parade to St. John the Baptist's Church in the Bristol Road[2] The procession consisted of the hearse, drawn by six horses, and followed by six mourning coaches, and Mrs. Fitzherbert's private carriage. Among the principal mourners were, the Earl of Munster,

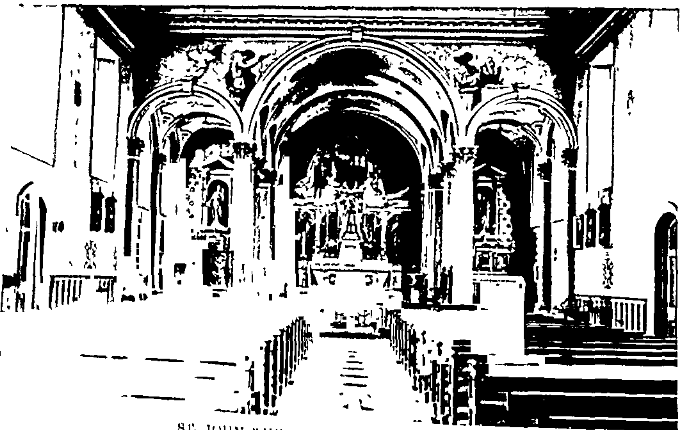
[1] Mr J. G Bishop, the historian of the Brighton Pavilion, a much respected townsman of Brighton, has told me that he remembers well the lying in state He was then a small boy, calling at the house on some errand, and one of the servants took him into the room.

[2] "I saw her funeral cross the Steine," Mr Saunders told me "There was an enormous crowd, such as I never saw before in Brighton; to us it seemed like a state funeral, but it was not." Mr J. G Bishop and Mr John Haines also told me they saw the funeral procession, and there are other inhabitants of Brighton, still living, who remember it too

representing the King, Colonel the Hon. George Dawson Damer, Captain the Hon. Edward Stafford Jerningham, Sir Frederick Hervey Bathurst, Bart., Sir George Seymour, K.C.B., and Colonel Gurwood.

The coffin was placed by the side of the grave, which was in the centre of the church, facing the altar. Mrs. Dawson Damer and Mrs. Edward Jerningham, who had previously driven to the church, occupied seats close to the grave. The church was hung with black; the only light proceeding from the wax tapers around the coffin, those on the altar, and a few which lighted the church. No one was admitted to the church except those provided with tickets, nevertheless the sacred building was crowded with mourners, who included most of the principal people in Brighton, not only Roman Catholics, but also Churchmen and Nonconformists. The Requiem Mass was sung by the Rev. Dr. Cullen, assisted by several other priests, including Father Lopez. At the conclusion of the Mass the coffin was lowered into the grave, whilst the *Benedictus* was sung by the choir. The service was concluded by Dr. Cullen reciting the Lord's Prayer in English.

At the close of the service, many persons pressed forward to look at the last resting-place of one whom they had loved. In consideration of the numbers who wished to do so, the church was allowed to remain open until five o clock in the evening. A continuous stream of people passed the grave during the day, and many who had



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHURCH, BRIGHTON
Where Mrs. Fitzherbert is Buried

not been present at the service, were thus able to pay a last tribute of respect to the deceased.

On the Sunday following the funeral, many relatives and friends of Mrs. Fitzherbert attended divine service at the church of St. John the Baptist. The sermon at High Mass was preached by the Rev. Dr. Cullen, who took occasion to dwell on the many virtues of the deceased lady. No allusion was made by the preacher to the peculiar position she had occupied in her life, but his discourse was based on the words, "*I will give thee a crown of life.*"[1]

Nearly seventy years have come and gone since Maria Fitzherbert was laid to rest in the little church at Brighton. In the great bustling town outside, the very name of the woman to whom, perhaps more than any one else, Brighton owes its prosperity, is well-nigh forgotten; and except for the changed and dismantled house on the Steine, one may search in vain for any trace of her. But in the quiet church where she sleeps her last sleep her tradition still lingers. One who was not of her faith, and not of her blood, but was bound to her by the strongest ties of love and duty, her adopted daughter, Mrs. Damer, has raised a marble monument to her memory. The veiled and kneeling figure reveals Mrs.

[1] The will of Mrs Fitzherbert, with two codicils, was proved April 20, 1837, at Doctors' Commons, by Sir George Seymour, Colonel Gurwood, and Samuel Forster, Esq, the executors. The amount of personal property was sworn under £35,000

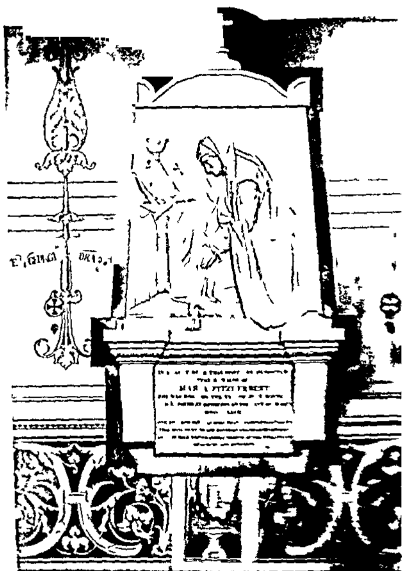
Fitzherbert as she was in the last year of her life. Beneath runs this inscription:—

"In a vault near this spot are deposited the remains of
MARIA FITZHERBERT.
She was born on the 26th of July, 1756,
And expired at Brighton on the 27th of March, 1837.
One to whom she was more than a parent has
placed this monument to her revered and beloved
memory, as a humble though feeling tribute of
her everlasting gratitude and affection.
R.I.P.

That is all, but on the third finger of the left hand there appears a *third* wedding ring—a silent witness to the fact that this woman, though never a Queen, was yet a King's wife.

Mrs. Fitzherbert's death occasioned widespread grief, and the public and private testimony to her worth was great. The press teemed with notices, some of them not very accurate in their facts, but all, with rare exceptions, speaking of the deceased lady with great respect.[1] The day after she died expresses were sent to Windsor, Kensington, and other residences of the members of the royal family, announcing the sad intelligence. King William IV. was walking on the terrace at Windsor when the news came. He heard it with emotion, and immediately went indoors to tell the Queen. The King and Queen and nearly every member of the royal family wrote to Mrs. Damer to express their deep regret. The Duke of Sussex, to whom Mrs. Damer had sent a ring containing some of

[1] *Vide* Appendix D.



THE MEMORIAL [illegible]
THE [illegible]

Mrs Fitzherbert's hair, wrote thanking her for "the memorial of my dear and lamented friend, though indeed my regard and friendship for her was too sincere to require anything to put me in mind of her"[1]

Lady Louisa Stuart,[2] who was a contemporary of Mrs Fitzherbert, and had known her throughout her long life, wrote to her nephew, Colonel Damer, saying "I can imagine no heavier affliction than has befallen Mrs Damer It is no matter by what *name* people are called, the cherisher of her infancy and the tender friend of her youth was essentially a *mother* to her, and only entitled to the more affection and gratitude for being so *voluntarily*, and not bound to it by duty I always believed poor Mrs Fitzherbert very amiable, and respected her character even in old days, when party set in full tide against her, so I can give credit to everything you say No woman that ever enjoyed the confidence of a prince kept so clear of abusing it, or meddled so little with matters of state and I am persuaded she never made an enemy in her life"[3]

The Duke of Bedford wrote to Sir Henry Halford "Poor Mrs Fitzherbert! I had known her for more than fifty years She had a feeling and excellent heart'[4]

Lord Munster wrote to Mrs Damer a few months later —

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[1] Kensington Palace, May 26 1837

[2] Lady Louisa Stuart (1737–1851) daughter of John, Earl of Bute (sometime Prime Minister), and grand-daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

[3] Gloucester Place, London W., March 30, 1837

[4] Woburn Abbey, March 29 1837

"BRIGHTON, *August* 28, 1837.

"I have been over the old house on the Steine. I had no idea the whole house and furniture would be so exactly as she left it. What scenes did not every object recall to my remembrance! The dressing-room with most of the India ink profiles there—a little white bed in the corner of *her* bedroom, that sad room. On entering the drawing-room, I almost expected to see you on the sofa behind the screen—all as you saw it the last time. I stood in the library and remembered it as your old school-room with the governess. I went down to the dining-room, where as a boy I used to dine sometimes five days out of the seven, and you came in to dessert. I recalled it as our theatre, where we used to act. And then as hung with black on the last sad occasion, when she left us for the last time."

Nearly every contemporary writer, who has occasion to allude to Mrs. Fitzherbert, speaks of her in terms of the highest praise. Even Greville, who was no respecter of persons, wrote in his diary: "She was not a clever woman, but of a very noble spirit, disinterested, generous, honest, and affectionate, greatly beloved by her friends and relations, popular in the world, and treated with uniform distinction and respect by the royal family."[1]

Within three months of Mrs. Fitzherbert's death King William IV. died, and the youthful Queen

[1] "Greville Memoirs," ed. 1885, vol. iii. p. 396.

Victoria ascended the throne, who by her pure life and lofty ideals was destined to restore the prestige of the British Monarchy. In the enthusiasm aroused by the new reign, the Georgian era, and its contemporary figures, good and bad alike, were hurried into oblivion—Mrs. Fitzherbert among them. But among the friends who had known and loved her, her memory was cherished so long as they lived, as that of a noble and true-hearted woman.

APPENDIX A

THE FITZHERBERT PAPERS

(1833–1905)

"To save mine honour from corruption."

When in August 1833 Mrs. Fitzherbert placed the papers which she had reserved from the burning at Coutts's Bank, "at the disposal of the Earl of Albemarle and Lord Stourton," it was to Lord Stourton that she looked chiefly for help and guidance concerning them. Lord Stourton was her cousin and a Roman Catholic. Necessarily, therefore, there existed between them a community of interest which could not be shared by Lord Albemarle, who though a trusted friend, was bound to her by neither the tie of blood nor of religion. It was necessary for Mrs. Fitzherbert to have two trustees, but it was to Lord Stourton that she entrusted the vindication of her character with posterity. This is clear from a letter she wrote to him from Paris, December 7, 1833, a few months after the papers had been deposited at Coutts's Bank. After thanking him for the interest he took in her affairs, she said:—

"I know I must have been a great torment to you, but I am sure the kind feelings of your heart will derive some gratification, in having relieved me from a state of misery and anxiety which has been

the bane of my life, and *I trust, whenever it shall please God to remove me from this world, my conduct and character (in your hands) will not disgrace my family and my friends*"[1]

Mrs Fitzherbert's intention, therefore, with regard to the papers was perfectly clear On her return to England in 1834, and during the last three years of her life (1834–1837), she frequently discussed the subject with Lord Stourton She authorised him to write her biography after her death, and dictated a short narrative of her life to him, which, with the papers she had retained at Coutts's Bank, she deemed sufficient for the purpose The time she left to his discretion Lord Stourton urged her to give more definite instructions as to what was to be done with the papers in the case of the death of one or both of the trustees, and she promised to do so, but postponed the matter After the death of Sir William Knighton in 1836 Lord Stourton again raised the question He wrote to her (November 29, 1836) "What disposition of these papers is to be made, *after the demise of those* whom you have appointed executors in regard of them?'[2]" and asking for more explicit instructions Mrs Fitzherbert merely acknowledged Lord Stourton's letter, and promised to discuss the matter fully with him when she next came to London But when she came Lord Stourton was at Allerton, so she wrote to him —

"I have seen Lord Albemarle frequently, and

[1] Langdale, *op cit*, p 108 All the quotations in this Appendix are from Langdale's "Memoir," unless otherwise stated.

[2] Extract from a letter of Lord Stourton's to Mrs. Fitzherbert at Brighton, dated Allerton, November 29 1836.

told him the contents of your letter, respecting your seal, in case the papers should be removed from Coutts's; but as you had left town, and as you were the chief person I wished to consult about them, I have, for the present, desired Lord Albemarle not to make any application to the Duke of Wellington till some future occasion."

It is unwise to delay when one is over eighty: and a few months after writing this letter Mrs. Fitzherbert died, without leaving any definite instructions as to what was to be done with the papers at Coutts's Bank. Hence arose the difficulties and confusion that followed. Some ten days after Mrs. Fitzherbert's death, in consequence of the announcement of an unauthorised memoir, Lord Albemarle wrote to Lord Stourton (April 6, 1837) and suggested that they should consult together concerning "the charge confided to us." The publication of the unauthorised memoir was presumably prevented, since none appeared, and Lord Stourton, to whom the task of writing the authorised biography had been entrusted by Mrs. Fitzherbert, wished to break the seals of the package at Coutts's Bank to see what was in the papers. But the Duke of Wellington's *knowledge* was necessary to the opening of the parcel: the Duke considered this also to mean his *consent*, and he demurred. Lord Albemarle did not like to press the matter in the face of the Duke's unwillingness, and so Lord Stourton was reluctantly induced to yield to the Duke's suggestion that the documents should be left, for the time, undisturbed. "The Duke of Wellington," he says, "assumed that Mrs. Fitz-

herbert herself had shown an indisposition to disturb and reopen this parcel, and therefore that her friends could not, and ought perhaps not, to be more watchful over her character than she had been herself." Lord Stourton told the Duke that "my acquaintance with Mrs. Fitzherbert's sentiments as to these papers was wholly at variance to the views so entertained by his Grace." But the Duke was not to be persuaded, and Lord Stourton was induced, "however reluctantly, to yield to his Grace's suggestions, and to leave the documents for the time undisturbed."

Though foiled in this instance, Lord Stourton continued to keep watch over Mrs. Fitzherbert's good name and fair memory. In 1838, there appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*[1] an article on the marriage of Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Prince of Wales, which, though favourable to the deceased lady, contained certain errors of fact. Lord Stourton at once wrote to correct these errors. His letter was inserted in the following number of the *Edinburgh Review*,[2] and contained the following: "The marriage ceremony was performed not out of the kingdom, as you have stated, but in her own drawing-room, in her house in town, in the presence of an officiating Protestant clergyman, and of two of her own nearest relatives."

One would have thought this statement was conclusive, coming as it did from one of the leading Roman Catholic laymen in England, a cousin and trustee of the deceased lady. But the public denials in the House of Commons of Mrs. Fitzherbert's

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, No. cxxxv. [2] Ibid., No. cxxxvi.

marriage were not forgotten, and it was still regarded as an open question whether she had been through *any* ceremony of marriage with the late King George IV. No one was more conscious of this than Lord Stourton, and in 1841 he made another attempt to have the packet at Coutts's Bank opened, and so put all doubt at end. "The first question is," he wrote to Lord Albemarle, "and to that I cannot reply in any way quite satisfactorily myself, what these papers are?" He asked Lord Albemarle to see the Duke of Wellington about it. Lord Albemarle did so, and wrote to Lord Stourton (February 1, 1841) a letter in which he said that he had called upon the Duke, who read Lord Stourton's letter. "He then requested me to state to you, that he felt he had a public duty as well as a private one to perform in keeping the papers alluded to, if possible, undisturbed, on account of their importance; that there was not now, nor had there been, any attack upon Mrs. Fitzherbert's reputation. Did any appear in any quarter, he would be eager in joining us to repel it." The Duke, however, expressed his willingness to discuss the matter with Lord Stourton, when he should come to town.

Lord Stourton heard nothing further from the Duke until he received a long letter, dated "Walmer Castle, August 10, 1841," in which, after stating his view of the circumstances which led to the placing of the papers in Coutts's Bank, the Duke said:—

"Circumstances have in some degree changed since the death of Mrs. Fitzherbert, but it is still very desirable to avoid drawing public attention to,

of strict veracity, is curious, and I believe correct. It was at the Prince's own earnest and repeated solicitations, and not at Mrs. Fitzherbert's request, that any ceremony was resorted to. She knew it to be invalid in law; she thought it nonsense, and told the Prince so. In proof that such had been her uniform opinion, she adduced a very striking circumstance, namely—that no ceremony by a Roman Catholic priest took place at all; the most obvious method of allaying her scruples, had she had any. I believe, therefore, that she spoke with truth when she frankly owned that she had given herself up to him, exacted no conditions, trusted to his honour, and set no value on the ceremony which he insisted on having solemnised."[1]

Mr. Langdale regarded this as an attack on Mrs. Fitzherbert's honour and good faith, and a reflection on her religion, as her marriage was regarded as valid by her Church. He thought that the time had come for him to write Mrs. Fitzherbert's biography, and tell the true story of the marriage. He therefore wrote to Mr. Edward Keppel (November 16, 1854), and requested that "a copy of the preserved documents should be placed at my disposal, the more effectively to establish the grounds upon which the friends and relations of this Lady have ever maintained her full and fair claim to their respect and esteem, and to the character of an honourable and religious woman."

In reply Mr. Keppel asked for time to consider the matter, and informed Mr. Langdale, "The

[1] "Memoirs of the Whig Party," by Lord Holland, edited by his son. Vol II p. 140.

packet you refer to is safe at Coutts's, the seals at present unbroken."

Mr. Langdale agreed to a few weeks' delay only, premising "that it is important the defence should not be too long delayed." Months passed and he heard nothing. He therefore wrote again, February 16, 1855, asking for a definite answer. Then Mr. Keppel wrote, February 23, 1855, and said that he had consulted the Duke of Bedford, and through him taken the opinion of Mrs. Fitzherbert's surviving executors, Sir George Seymour and Mr. Forster. "They are strongly against the production of these papers. They would only prove the marriage of the Prince with Mrs. Fitzherbert, which is not questioned, as Lord Holland's remarks go to the motives and feelings of herself and the Prince, which the evidence in the papers would not touch."

Against this decision Mr. Langdale lodged a spirited protest, and announced his intention of defending Mrs. Fitzherbert's reputation at all costs. He reminded Mr. Keppel that the papers were placed at Coutts's Bank by Mrs. Fitzherbert to prove her marriage with the Prince of Wales, and that was the only reason they were placed there. He added: "That the reserved papers were intended for such a purpose, and that the trustees to whose charge they were committed received them with such an understanding from her whose property they were, you must excuse me if I confidently repeat. The refusal to place them at my disposal, renders it more imperative upon me to lay before the public the whole detail of the con-

nection between Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV., then Prince of Wales, as narrated by herself to the late Lord Stourton; and which, without the reserved documents, will, I trust, show to the world, that whatever the conduct of Georgè IV. may have been, that of Mrs. Fitzherbert, under trials of no ordinary description, was such as to have done honour to the purity of her character as a woman, and to her principles as a Catholic."

Mr. Langdale thereupon wrote the "Memoirs of Mrs. Fitzherbert, with an account of her Marriage with H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, afterwards King George the Fourth,"[1] to which frequent reference has been made in this book. The book consists of the short narrative of her life which Mrs. Fitzherbert told to Lord Stourton; a list of the papers which she had deposited at Coutts's Bank, and all the correspondence which had passed relating to them after her death. Mr. Langdale made an eloquent defence of Mrs. Fitzherbert as a woman of virtue and a good Roman Catholic. He thus defends his own action in publishing the book:—

"All minor considerations," he says, "must yield before the paramount duty to the memory of a woman to establish her full and fair title to the virtue of chastity. That such was Mrs. Fitzherbert's just prerogative, grounded upon the strictest dictates of her conscience, and supported by the principles of her religion, and sanctioned by the decision of her

[1] Only a limited edition of this book was publish Mr Langdale refused to have it reprinted It h out of print

Church, I am bound at all hazards to establish. To this I consider myself pledged, this I owe to the memory of the dead. This I owe to the cause of virtue, truth and religion, and at any personal risk of imputations of what nature soever, or from what quarter soever, this I am prepared, without reserve, to undertake."

By the publication of this book in 1856, Mr. Langdale authoritatively informed the world of the fact that a ceremony of marriage had taken place between the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert. Mr. Langdale, it is true, was unable to publish the documents which Mrs. Fitzherbert had expressly deposited at Coutts's Bank to prove her marriage, but he gave a list of them and their purport. The fact that he was refused permission to publish these papers, only served to whet the public curiosity as to their contents.

As the years wore by repeated applications were made to see the papers which she deposited at Coutts's Bank, but the applications were always met with a *non possumus*. As Mrs. Fitzherbert had left no clear directions concerning the disposition of these papers after the deaths of the original trustees, the question had in fact become one of some difficulty.

So matters remained until 1905, when, under circumstances related in the preface to this book, I made an application to His Majesty the King to be allowed to see these papers, and to quote from them all that was necessary to prove the marriage of George Prince of Wales with Mrs. Fitzherbert. His Majesty was graciously pleased

to grant my request, and the mystery of the Fitzherbert papers was at last solved. These documents, after a sojourn of nearly seventy years at Coutts's Bank, have now found a more fitting home in the private archives of Windsor Castle.

APPENDIX B

MRS. FITZHERBERT'S WILL

Extracted from the Principal Registry of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

THIS IS THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT of me MARIA FITZHERBERT of Tilney Street, in the county of Middlesex. I give all my plate and plated articles, trinkets and personal ornaments to the Honorable Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer, wife of the Honorable Colonel George Lionel Dawson Damer, and to my niece, the Honorable Mary Anne Stafford Jerningham, wife of the Honorable Edward Stafford Jerningham, equally to be divided between them for their respective separate use.

I give all the residue of my personal estate whatsoever, after payment of my debts, funeral and testamentary expenses, and such legacies and annuities as I may bequeath by any codicil to this my will, to Mrs. Damer's brother Sir George Seymour, a Captain in the Royal Navy, James Weld of Lulworth Castle in the county of Dorset, Esquire, Lieutenant-Colonel Gurwood, and Samuel Forster of Lincoln's Inn, Gentleman, their executors, administrators, and assigns: In trust to get in and sell the same, and to stand possessed of the same, and the produce thereof, on the trusts hereinafter

mentioned, that is to say: In trust to invest the same in Government or real securities at interest with power from time to time to vary the said fund but during the lives of Colonel and Mrs. Damer and the life of the survivor of them with their his or her consent to be signified in writing, and to stand possessed of such funds and securities: In trust to pay the income thereof to the said Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer during her life for her separate use, and so that the same shall not be subject to the debts or control of her husband and that she shall not be at liberty to anticipate such income. And after her decease: In trust to pay the income of the same fund to the said George Lionel Dawson Damer during his life and after the decease of the survivor of them the said trust fund shall be: In trust for all or such one or more of the children of the said Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer, at such ages and times and in such shares and manner and with such provisions for maintenance during minority and for advancement in the world as the said Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer shall by deed or will executed in the presence of two or more witnesses appoint. And in default of such appointment: In trust for all the children of the said Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer, who, being sons shall attain the age of twenty-one years, or being daughters shall attain that age or marry, equally to be divided between them if more than one [illegible] such child then: In trust for such [illegible] there shall be no such child: In trust for the said Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer, her exe-

cutors, administrators and assigns. And I hereby declare that no child of the said Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer taking any part of the said trust fund under any appointment to be made by her shall be entitled to any share of the unappointed part of the same fund without bringing his or her appointed share into hotchpot. And I hereby declare that after the decease of the survivor of them the said George Lionel Dawson Damer and Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer it shall be lawful for the said trustees or trustee to apply the whole or any part of the expectant share of any child in the said trust fund towards his or her advancement, and to apply the whole or any part of the income of such share in or towards his or her maintenance or education. And in case any of the trustees hereby appointed, or who shall be appointed as hereinafter mentioned, shall die or resign or decline to act in, or wish to be discharged from, the trusts hereby respectively reposed in them, I empower the said Mary Georgina Emma Dawson Damer, and after her death the said George Lionel Dawson Damer, and after their deaths the surviving or continuing trustees or trustee of the same fund, and if there shall be no such trustee then the executors or administrators of the last surviving trustee, by deed to appoint new trustees when necessary in the usual manner, who shall have all the same powers as the trustees had in whose room they shall be appointed. And I declare that the trustees for the time being shall be only responsible for their own acts and defaults, and shall have power to reimburse themselves their costs and expences.

And I appoint the said George Seymour, James Weld, John Gurwood and Samuel Forster EXECUTORS of this my will And I desire that no hatchment may be affixed to either of my houses IN WITNESS whereof I have to this my last will and testament contained in three sheets of paper set my hand and seal, that is to say to the two preceding sheets subscribed my name, and to this third and last sheet subscribed my name and affixed my seal, this twenty-fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six

MARIA FITZHERBERT (L S)

SIGNED sealed, published, and declared by the said Maria Fitzherbert the testatrix as and for her last will and testament in the presence of us, who in her presence at her request and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses

S CHOLMELEY,
BARTLE J L FRERE, Lincoln's Inn

LONDON, *March 28 18[illegible]6*

I, MARIA FITZHERBERT, do make and declare this paper writing a CODICIL to my last will and testament and to be considered as such To my dear sister in law Mrs Wat Smyth, one thousand pounds legacy To my two nieces Lady Bathurst and Mrs Craven one thousand pounds each I have ever felt for them both as great an interest and very sincere affection, and had in a former will left them considerable legacies Since that period

they have both been greatly provided for, and do not stand in need of any assistance from me. I beg my kind friends S[r] George Seymour and Frederick Seymour to accept five hundred pounds each of them as a small token of remembrance, having always had a very sincere regard and affection for them. Annuities for life: two hundred pounds to my friend Miss Lucia Jeffreys, two hundred to William Dawson, R.N., one hundred to Henry Daykin. To Mrs. Viney, Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Townshend each thirty pounds pr. ann. To Thos. Fisher eighty pounds pr. ann. Mrs. Street twenty-four pounds, Henry Daykin £100, Mrs. Street £50, Mrs. Viney, Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Townshend £300 each legacy. To Richard Bassett four hundred pounds legacy. I desire that the annuitys and legacys bequeathed to all my servants may be paid free of all taxes, and I request my executors to pay such duties out of the residue of my personal estate. I leave to the Honble. George D. Damer three hundred pounds legacy, and thirty pounds annuity for life to Mrs. Haselhurst, in trust to the above George D. Damer, for her own private use, totally independent of her husband. I desire my servants may have mourning and one month's board wages. The above codicil written in my own handwriting and signed by me in the presence of

MARIA FITZHERBERT.

Witnessed by

MUNSTER, 13 Belgrave Street, London.
HARRY BLAKER, Surgeon, 33 West Street, Brighton.

Brighton, Ap[l] 26th, 1836.

To Mary Anne Jerningham and Minney Damer

THIS PAPER is addressed to my two dear children, who I am sure will strictly comply with a few requests I wish to make Life is uncertain, and my health and spirits are often so much depressed that I am fit for nothing Still my anxiety is great respecting them I pray to God they may both live long with sincere affection and attachment to each other I am confident this will be the case, the thought reconciles my mind at taking a long farewell of them I have loved them both with the tenderest affection any mother could do, and I have done to the utmost in my power for their interests and comfort God bless them both, as well as all those that belong to them I beg my dear George Damer to accept of the two large pictures of Gainsbro's in my dining room as a small remembrance of me To dear Minney a round Sèvre table, and to Mary Anne a small commode, inlaid w^h Sèvre, which generally stands in one of the drawing rooms a picture of Admiral Paynes I desire may be sent in my name to Cap^n Mason at Lord Hood's I have packed up trinkets in separate boxes at the Bankers w^h Mr Foster will deliver to you I have written upon some of them directions how they are to be disposed of The picture of the late King George the 4th by Madame le Brun belongs to Minney Damer I gave it her a long time ago

MARIA FITZHERBERT

Prerogative.—In the Goods of Maria Fitzherbert, widow, deceased:—

APPEARED PERSONALLY, Bartle John Laurie Frere, a Partner in the firm of Messrs. Frere and Forster and Frere, of New Square, Lincoln's Inn, in the county of Middlesex, Solicitors, and Stephen Cholmeley, a Clerk in the said firm, and made oath that they the said Messrs. Frere & Forster were the Solicitors of the above-named Maria Fitzherbert, late of Tilney Street in the county of Middlesex, and of Brighton in the county of Sussex, widow, deceased, and that the deponents have frequently seen her write and subscribe her name to paper writings, and are thereby become well acquainted with her manner and character of handwriting and subscription. And they, having now carefully viewed and inspected the paper writings hereto annexed, purporting to be, and contain, two codicils to the last will and testament of the said deceased, the first of the said Codicils beginning thus: "I Maria Fitzherbert do make and declare this paper writing a codicil to my last will and testament," ending thus: "The above codicil written in my own handwriting and signed by me in the presence of," and thus subscribed: "Maria Fitzherbert," and having the following written at the foot thereof, to wit, "Brighton, Ap[l] 26th, 1836," and the word four written on erasure in the 11th line of the second side. The second Codicil beginning thus: "Mary Anne Jerningham and Minney Damer," ending thus: "I gave it her a long time ago," and thus subscribed: "Maria Fitzherbert," say they verily and in their consciences believe the date "Brighton,

Ap[l] 26th, 1836," at the foot of the first Codicil as aforesaid, and the said word "four" written on erasure in the 11th line of the second side thereof, and the whole body, series and contents of the said second codicil, to be of the proper handwriting of the said Maria Fitzherbert, widow, deceased.

BARTLE J. L. FRERE,
S. CHOLMELEY.

On the 12th day of April, 1837, the said Bartle John Laurie Frere and Stephen Cholmeley were duly sworn to the truth of this Affidavit before me,

JOHN DAUBENEY, Sur[e].
Present—W. TOWNSEND, Not. Pub.

In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

In the Goods of Maria Fitzherbert, widow, deceased:—

APPEARED PERSONALLY, Sir George Francis Seymour of Hampton Court Palace in the county of Middlesex and made oath that he is one of the executors named in the last will and testament with two codicils of Maria Fitzherbert, late of Tilney Street in the county of Middlesex, and of Brighton in the county of Sussex, widow, deceased; and the Deponent now referring to the second Codicil hereto annexed and which is without date, in which appears the following clause:—"I have packed up trinkets in separate boxes at the Bankers w[h] Mr. Forster will deliver to you, and have written upon some of them directions how they are to be disposed of," saith that on the 8th day of the present month

he was present in the deceased's house in Tilney Street aforesaid, with Lieutenant-Colonel G. Gurwood and Mr. Samuel Forster his co-executors, when a box which had been deposited by the deceased at Messrs. Coutts her Bankers, and had been brought from thence, was opened for their examination, and which was examined by Deponent in presence of his said Co-Executors accordingly. That in such box was found a box sealed up in paper on which was written "Belongs to the Honble. Mrs. Dawson Damer, August 23rd, 1836," a small paper packet also sealed up, on which was likewise written, according to the best of Deponent's recollection and belief, "This belongs to Mrs. Dawson Damer," and that there was also found in the said box a snuff box wrapped in a piece of loose brown paper having Mrs. Damer's name written thereon. The Deponent lastly saith that save as above set forth there were no trinkets in the said box, upon which the name of any person or directions as to their disposal were written, and that the said two sealed boxes have remained unopened.

G. F. SEYMOUR.

On the 11th April, 1837, the said Sir Francis Seymour was duly sworn to the truth of this Affidavit Before me

JOHN DAUBENEY, Sur^e^.
Pres^t^—WM. TOWNSEND, Not. Pub.

Proved with two Codicils, 20th April 1837.

Fos. 28.—J. J. C.

APPENDIX C

CONCERNING CERTAIN RELICS OF MRS FITZ HERBERT AT BRIGHTON

A FEW years ago certain relics of Mrs Fitzherbert were on view at the Brighton Museum to wit —

1 A pair of small gold shoe buckles, of oval shape and narrow metal

2 Plain gold bracelet, thin but broad, with a small oval malachite stone, which has been cracked

3 A round piece of gold-coloured iron pyrites, which used to be on Mrs Fitzherbert's dressing-table At that period pyrites were considered to be thunderbolts, but now are known to be of earthly origin

4 A large twisted glass scent bottle, with brass top, wrought to represent a collection of flowers and fruits In spite of its age, the bottle still retains a powerful odour of some mixed scent

5 A pair of rather remarkable earrings, of the drop and pendant shape The earrings are made of some curious dark red substance, covered with glittering spangles, probably a kind of cornelian On each are two tiny pictures, composed of extremely minute mosaics, the details of which can only be seen by the aid of a magnifying glass

6 A slender gold ring with amethyst.

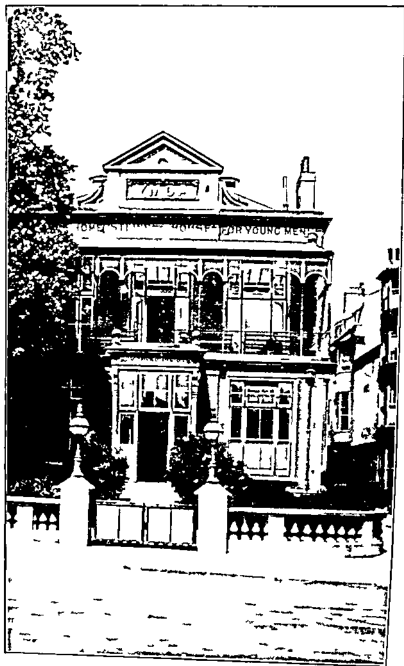
7 A waistcoat button, which belonged to George IV It is of dark blue, studded with gold stars, and has an edging of small diamonds

8 A cuff link which belonged to George IV [illegible] of one large probably imitation [illegible]

9. A small diamond hair-pin, which belonged to Mrs. Fitzherbert.
10. A very delicate ivory fan, about six inches long, each shaft, which is carved with fretwork, being so thin as to be translucent. The whole is held together by a diamond-headed rivet.
11. A beautiful gold watch, about an inch and a quarter in diameter. The face and back are edged with seed pearls. The dial is enamelled. The watch is of a vertical escape movement, and apparently in good working order.
12. A gold, richly-chased buckle for a waistbelt, the ornamentation being in some parts enamelled in different colours.
13. A porcelain scent bottle, with a gold top, the shape being a flattened sphere. It had a pattern of lines, enclosing small flowers and butterflies. There is still a slight odour about it.
14. A small flat candlestick, with hexagonal tray, ornamented with gold and pictures of small shells.
15. A small circular china stand.
16. A summer dress of white muslin, covered with a line pattern and small flowers worked by hand in different coloured silks. In some places the colours are very bright, and in others faded.
17. A white shawl, with fringe and deep border of a dark-coloured pattern.
18. Two satin sachets, one probably used to carry a purse, of pointed shape and three-sided, cream-coloured, covered with flower pattern in gold thread, and the other, probably used for carrying a handkerchief, flat and oblong in shape, lined with cream-coloured satin; the outside has a ruby ground with stamped cornflower pattern in cream colour.[1]

Mrs. Fitzherbert gave these articles to her maid, who had been with her for many years, and to

[1] *Brighton Herald.*



MRS. FITZHERBERT'S HOUSE AT BRIGHTON

(As it is to-day)

whom she also bequeathed an annuity. On her death the maid left these relics to her relative, the wife of a Mr. Rush, of Daventry. When Mrs. Rush died, her husband submitted them to the Mayor and Corporation of Brighton, in the hope that they would purchase them as relics of a lady who had done so much for Brighton. They were on view for some time at the Brighton Museum, and attracted considerable interest. But the Corporation declined to buy the relics, and they passed into the hands of a private collector, Mr. John Haines, a much respected townsman of Brighton. Through the courtesy of Mr. Haines, I am able to publish a few of them in this book.

Mrs. Fitzherbert's house at Brighton, Steine House, was sold by public auction in January 1838. Her furniture, except for certain articles which Colonel and Mrs. Damer removed to 6 Tilney Street (her London house), was also sold by auction a few days previously. Some of it still survives, scattered about in various houses in Brighton, but little of it could now be authenticated. In the case of the relics above mentioned, no such difficulty exists, and it is a pity that the Brighton Municipality allowed them, with their interesting associations, to pass out of their hands. In Mrs. Fitzherbert's old house on the Steine there is nothing to tell one that she once lived there; and in the Pavilion, where she once reigned almost as a queen, there is little to recall her memory except three or four cartoons, one of them so scurrilous that it ought not to be allowed to disfigure the walls.

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her And when we say this, we mean to say that we have reason to believe that, from nearly the first moment her name became conspicuous in the annals of this country, she enjoyed the esteem and expressed regard of the very *highest Personages* in it The influence she possessed was always exercised for the honour of the Personage she was, by the forms of her Church united to His honour, that of the country, and his position in it were it is well known, the first objects of her anxiety Through an existence prolonged beyond the lot of most people, she made more real friends than almost any one we are acquainted with Those friendships were cemented by a reliance on the integrity of her character, and led to unlimited confidence, which was ever observed by her with sacred inviolability The honour, frankness, and straightforwardness of her disposition procured her the intimate acquaintance of some of the most eminent men of the time in which she lived Many of them are still alive, and can bear witness to the truth with which this portrait of her is drawn, and to the affectionate respect with which, to her latest breath they have continued to regard her. In her more familiar circle [illegible] gent and hospitable [illegible] age the warmth, the [illegible] disinterested feelings of [illegible] Her [illegible] fervent and unostentatious Her [illegible] active benevolence Her [illegible] remarkable, and [illegible] she was herself [illegible]

Many are those [illegible]

her generosity to a very unusual degree; charity was never asked of her in vain. Very numerous are the persons who for years have existed on her support. To her more immediate attendants she was at once a friend and a benefactress. She has sunk into her grave full of years, having a firm reliance on the merits of her Saviour, lamented by all who had the happiness to know her, but deeply deplored by those who for many years have been the objects upon whom her tender solicitude was lavished, and will ever revere her memory. Her loss to the poor will be irreparable, and society in general will feel the void left by one who possessed, in an eminent degree, more of the finer qualities of our nature, and fewer of the imperfect, than any one to whom we can at present allude. We shall close this hasty and incomplete sketch of the character of this most exalted and excellent lady, by informing our readers that she was one of the first persons who attracted good company to Brighton, and to her undoubtedly were due many of the first advantages possessed by this town."

APPENDIX E

LIST OF AUTHORITIES

UNPUBLISHED MSS

1 The Fitzherbert Papers, formerly at Coutts s Bank, now in the private archives at Windsor Castle By gracious permission of His Majesty the King
2 Letters from the Duke of Kent, the Duke of York, and other members of the Royal Family to Mrs Fitzherbert By gracious permission of His Majesty the King
3 Memorandum written by the late Admiral Sir George Seymour G C B, on the Education, by Mrs Fitzherbert, of the Hon. Mrs George Dawson Damer (*née* Seymour)
4 Extracts from the correspondence between Mrs Fitzherbert and the late Hon Mrs George Dawson Damer (1820–34)
5 Miscellaneous letters and documents duly specified in this book

PUBLISHED WORKS

Memoirs of Mrs Fitzherbert with an Account of her Marriage with H R H the Prince of Wales, afterwards King George IV By the Hon Charles Langdale 1856
Courts and Cabinets of George III By the Duke of Buckingham 1853
Memoirs of the Life of the Right Hon R B Sheridan By Thomas Moore 1825
Adolphus s History of George III 1841
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Horace Walpole s Letters Ed 1857

Autobiography of Miss Cornelia Knight, late companion to H.R.H. the Princess Charlotte of Wales.
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The Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical of the Church of England. By M. E. C. Wallcott.
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" " vol. xxvii.
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Memoirs of the Whig Party during my Time. By Henry Richard, Lord Holland. 1854.
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Lord Brougham's Memoirs.
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The Harcourt Papers.
Reminiscences of Henry Angelo.
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The Rutland Papers. Historical MSS. Commission.
The Fortescue MSS. " " "
The Carlisle MSS. " " "
The Lonsdale MSS. " " "
The Ailesbury MSS. " " "
The Creevey Papers. Edited by the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell.
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Fifty Years of my Life. By George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle. 1876.
Sir Henry Holland's Memoirs.

Life of Sir Henry Halford
The Greville Memoirs
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Florizel s Folly By John Ashton
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Doran s Lives of the Queens of England
Life of George IV By Percy Fitzgerald
The Journal of Mary Frampton, 1780–1843
Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis, K C B, with correspondence and diaries
Life of Fox By Lord John Russell
The Four Georges By W M Thackeray
A History of England in the Eighteenth Century By W E Lecky
Memoirs of Mary Robinson ("Perdita")
Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Richard Hurd
A History of Tong and Boscobel By George Griffiths
The Brighton Pavilion and its Royal Associations By J G Bishop

The following Pamphlets —

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A Review of the Conduct of the Prince of Wales, containing a detail of many circumstances relative to the Prince Mrs Fitzherbert, &c By W Jeffreys [Eighth Edition], 1806
Letter of Nemesis to Alfred Philip Wither 1789
A Narrative of the daring measures to suppress a pamphlet entitled "Strictures, or the Declaration of Horne Tooke respecting . Mrs Fitzherbert, &c" By P Wither. 1789
Recollections of Brighton in the Olden Time By a Native thereof
A Short Account of the principal Seats and Gardens around Twickenham *Circa*, 1770

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The Quarterly Review, The Edinburgh Review, The Dublin Review, The Dublin University Magazine, St. James's Magazine, Littell's Living Age, The European Magazine, Le Courier de l'Europe, The Times, The Morning Post, The Morning Herald, The Morning Chronicle, Notes and Queries, The Sussex Weekly Advertiser, The Brighton Herald, The Brighton Gazette, The Brighton Guardian, &c., &c.

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THE END

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